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CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

GERMAN  
PHILOSOPHY

Volume 3  
1983

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1983

Edited by

Darrel E. Christensen  
Manfred Riedel  
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## PREFACE

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In keeping with this objective, in the selection of articles to be published which shall have appeared in German, some preference is accorded to authors whose work for the most part has not as yet appeared in English. This preference shall not pertain with respect to Original Articles or to reviews, discussions, etc. Within these parameters, *CGP* is open to the full range of philosophical interests and orientations to which such philosophy in the German language as reflects cognizance of its historical roots importantly contributes. It is open as well to items of content which consider the bearings of insights within such allied fields as mathematics, political science, historiography, and linguistics upon philosophical issues. The term "contemporary" is intended to refer, not to any particular style of doing philosophy, but to philosophical literature of recent origin, occasionally reaching back as far as a decade or so. Approximately equal space is to be devoted to historical studies, theoretical philosophy, and practical philosophy.

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- (b) Articles which have appeared or are to appear in German.
- (c) Reviews, review articles, discussions, and notes relating principally to selected major works which have appeared in German, these being for the most part by English language authors.
- (d) Reviews, review articles, discussions, and notes relating principally to selected major English works, these for the most part having appeared in German.
- (e) Announcements which may be of interest to English readers, including a listing of works originating in German which have recently appeared or are scheduled to appear in English translation.

Commensurate with its aim of publishing quality translations by persons with the philosophical and linguistic training prerequisite to particular assignments and the patience for direct collaboration with authors, *CGP* seeks by every means to accord suitable recognition to this demanding role. To this end it maintains a listing of philosophers with the requisite interest and skills for translating work by German language authors into English and with information pertaining to specific areas of special philosophical competence. It maintains a listing of information concerning projects for translating German philosophy into English, as well. Contributions to either of these listings are appreciated and information from them may be obtained by writing to the Coordinator, Darrel E. Christensen, Josef-Messner-Str. 28, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria. A request for information to be sent by air mail should be accompanied by an international postal money order or U. S. stamps to cover postal costs.

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# Articles





## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE FORMAL CHARACTER OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THING AND PROPERTY\*

Josef König

Translated by Eric Randolph Miller

By the word "thing" we shall in what follows mean exclusively the so-called material thing.

As to the use of the expression "formal character of the difference between thing and property," it should not be necessary to indicate its explicit sense right at the beginning. I believe that, indirectly, it will become sufficiently clear through the following observations.

1. If one attempts to determine the formal character in question, the following observation may immediately obtrude upon one. A thing and its property are not the same. Nor do the expressions "thing"

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\* First published in *Philosophie und ihre Geschichte* (Festschrift für Joseph Klein zum 70. Geburtstag), edited by E. Fries and reprinted in: Josef König, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, edited by G. Patzig (Freiburg/München: Karl Albert Verlag, 1978), pp. 338-67.

Moving from passages in Kant and Russell, König investigates the relation between thing and property. He deals with the difficulties arising from the fact that, in this case, the purported relata are fundamentally one. Using a distinction he has found useful in other fields of enquiry, he develops the view that the concept of a "thing as such" and the concept of a particular sort of thing, say "tree," are not only different, but "totally" or "radically" different. Kant's distinction of empirical concepts and concepts *a priori*, although drawn along roughly the same lines, does not, according to König, do full justice to the nature of this difference: for even with Kant concepts *a priori* and empirical concepts are different species of the genus "concept," and Kant seems to think that objects may be "subsumed" equally under concepts of both kinds. (This, according to König, is the root of the "Transcendental Schematism.") Concepts such as "thing and property" or "cause and effect" are, however, according to König, not subsumption-concepts at all: they signify, rather, modes in which someone who perceives something "sees and thinks it, in one act, as . . ." or "conceives it as . . ." In the normal case, the concept is primary, to conceive something as an instance of it is secondary; in this special case, as with the concepts "thing" and "cause," the conceiving as . . . is primary, the concept secondary. (Summary by G. Patzig)

and "property" have the same meaning. A thing and its properties form, nevertheless, a unity; *one* thing and not somehow two things. Or, in other words: A thing is something and not nothing; and, similarly, a property of this thing may be said to be something and nothing. At the same time, however, one must somehow also say that a thing and its property are *one* something and not two somethings. This observation can make a certain formal state of affairs at least felt; and in the following two sections an attempt will be made to bring it a little closer to comprehension.

2. In this undertaking, I believe that I have received, in some measure, stimulation and, in some measure again, actual information from certain remarks of Kant's in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Let me begin, therefore, with a rather extensive discussion of these. Particular circumstances, however, call for a preliminary remark.

The remarks in question are to be found in Kant's "proof" of the first "Analogy of Experience" (B 229/231):<sup>i</sup> Kant, however, does not speak of thing and properties here, but rather of substance and accidents. I would like to state firmly that the reason I am nonetheless appealing to these here does not rest upon the opinion that the concept "thing and property" can be substituted for the category "*substantia et accidens*." I am not of this opinion, but I do find that certain sentences of Kant's, which concern the formal character of the difference between substance and accidents, remain singularly correct, if, in these sentences, one replaces the words "substance" and "accident" with the words "thing" and "property." These sentences then present quite well, and without any side-glances at Kant, the problem of the formal character of the difference between thing and property. Thus I cannot, strictly speaking, appeal to Kant, but I hope, nevertheless, for the reader's assent in starting from certain of Kant's remarks.

3. In Kant's Table of Categories, the category "of Inherence and Subsistence (*substantia et accidens*)" is the first of his three categories of "Relation." The two others are that "of Causality and Dependence (cause and effect)" and that "of Community (reciprocity between agent and patient)" (B 106). They are called categories of Relation since they are concepts that "contain" a relation (B 230). Even though he does not say so explicitly, there can be no doubt about what Kant means when he claims that the category "cause and effect" contains a relation. The category contains a relation, inasmuch as cause and effect are the terms of the dyadic relation "A is the cause of B." Already according to Aristotle's *Categories* (6 b), *Relativa — ad aliquid dicta*; Kant says "correlates," for example in B 110 — entail each other mutually. If it is true, for example, that A is the cause of B, then it is also true that B is the effect of A. And it is clearly with regard to this state of affairs that Kant says that the con-

cept "cause and effect" — Kant treats it, as he does "*substantia et accidens*," as *one* concept — "contains" a relation. A corresponding dyadic relation also exists in Kant's third category of relation.

With respect, however, to the category of "*substantia et accidens*," which is, strictly speaking, our sole concern here, one reads in B 230, and at first with some surprise, that "this category has to be assigned a place among the categories of relation, but rather as the condition of relations than as itself containing a relation." That it is, according to Kant, the condition of relations — namely the condition of the actual relations of cause and effect and of reciprocity — is certainly interesting in itself, but belongs exclusively in the context of Kant's Analogies of Experience, with which we are not concerned here. Relevant for our intentions is solely Kant's statement that the category "*substantia et accidens*" contains no relation. But why and how not?

Kant's opinion in this matter can be derived unambiguously from this text. Exactly for this reason, however, I may add some remarks for its interpretation. In a normal dyadic relation, both terms — assuming the truth of the corresponding statements — must have "existence": If the terms are facts, as in the relation "A is the cause of B," then A and B must both "exist." If the relation is, for instance, "Carl carries a suitcase," then Carl, as well as the suitcase, must somehow exist. If the concept "*substantia et accidens*" — tacitly I replace this here, as well as everywhere else, with "the concept of thing and property" — were to "contain" a relation, then not only substance would have to have existence; one would also have to ascribe "a separate" existence to accidents (B 230). But this would be incorrect. To be sure, it would be false to say that accidents — the properties — have no existence at all; but their existence is, according to Kant, not a "separate" existence beside the existence of substance, but is rather none other than the existence of the substance itself. For accidents are "the determinations of a substance, which are nothing but special ways in which it exists" (B 229). It follows, therefore, that the concept "*substantia et accidens*" does not contain a relation, or, at least, not a normal relation or a relation in the conventional sense.

There remain, nevertheless, certain difficulties, which, in Kant, become apparent in the following problem. As opposed to the clear statement that the concept "*substantia et accidens*" does not contain a relation, Kant considers — in the same context (B 230) — the possibility of giving "a separate existence" to "the real in substance,"<sup>1</sup> and says that, when one does this, "one entitles this separate exis-

<sup>1</sup> Kant means the accidents, and gives an example "motion, as an accident of matter." For my purposes, it will not be necessary to consider the matter further. Important for an interpretation of accidents as "the real in substance" — of the properties as the real in a thing — would be, above all, B 182.



tence . . . inherence, in distinction from the existence of substance, which is entitled subsistence.” And with some amazement, one remembers that even in his table of categories, Kant himself presents the category “*substantia et accidens*” also as the category “of Inherence and Subsistence.” “But,” he immediately continues,

this occasions many misunderstandings; it is more exact and more correct to describe an accident as being simply the way in which the existence of a substance is positively determined.

The comparative “more correct” sounds peculiar; and that which follows is also somewhat peculiar. For even though it remains true that the concept “*substantia et accidens*” contains no relation, Kant nevertheless in the end introduces an important argument as to why it would still make sense to ascribe a separate existence to the accidents as well. Even though it is more exact and more correct “to describe an accident as being simply the way in which the existence of a substance is positively determined,” it is at the same time

unavoidable, owing to the conditions of the logical employment of our understanding, to separate off, as it were, that which in the existence of a substance can change while the substance still remains, and to view this variable element in relation to the truly permanent and radical, . . .

I am not completely certain of which conditions of the logical employment of our understanding Kant is thinking here. But this question can remain open, because it in no way impairs the understanding of the flow of the argument as a whole.

At the end of this exposition I would like to repeat yet once again: What Kant himself would say of our replacing the words “substance” and “accident” with the words “thing” and “property” — certainly not everywhere in the text of the first analogy, but definitely in the quoted passages — need not, strictly speaking, concern us here. What I am maintaining is something else: Namely, that by means of this substitution one arrives at statements that admirably elucidate the problem of the formal character of the difference between thing and property. Exactly this appearance of vacillation on Kant’s part is what is so revealing for the comprehension of the matter: that the concept “thing and property” — in contrast, say, to the concept “cause and effect” — contains no relation, at least not in the usual sense, and that, nevertheless, there is a persuasive impression that one should be able to put one’s finger on some sort of relation between thing and property.

The formal difference between the concept “cause and effect” and the concept “thing and property” can be laid out, still coming indirectly from Kant, by means of a joke, for which I beg the reader’s indulgence: The “and” has a very different effect in each of the ex-



pressions; in the first case, as in the statement " $1 + 1 = 2$ "; in the second case, as in the statement " $1 + 1 = 1$ ."

In conclusion I would like to note the following. At the end of B 229, Kant explains (if I may paraphrase that which he says there and which was quoted above): It would be incorrect utterly to deny the accidents any existence, but their existence could not be anything different from the existence of the substance. Now the theoretical circumstances of which Kant is thinking here may easily be guessed, but the argumentation, which may be formally transferred to the situation concerning thing and property, is not satisfactory, for he seems finally to arrive at the result that one may, or even ought to, ascribe existence to the accidents, but that this existence is not at all their own, but rather that of substance. It should not be necessary to go into more detail here.

4. I would now like to give the discussion a new turn, by speaking, from here on, no longer simply about things, but rather about things as such, about things as things. That a thing as such, as a thing, subsists properties is a fairly familiar notion. The word "subsist" can be, without ado, replaced by the word "bear." A thing as such is then something like a property-bearer. As mentioned at the start, with the word "thing" we are thinking exclusively of the so-called material thing: a tree, a rock, a table are such things. Talking about a thing as a thing is a sort of formal summarization of many possible references, for instance, to a tree, a rock, or a table as a thing. It is to be noted, however, that a tree, for instance, "has" properties, and, in general, things "have" properties. But one must distinguish very carefully between the statement that things have properties and the statement that things *as such* subsist properties, or bear properties. The statement that a thing as such subsists properties is not merely a high-flown formulation of the statement that things have properties; it comes, rather, admittedly not solely, but certainly among other things, from the attempt to express that persuasive impression of the existence of a certain relation between thing and property. That there is something questionable about the statement that a thing as thing subsists properties is noticed when it is compared with statements to the effect that a cushion or a curtain subsists (bears) needles. A statement such as "Carl carries a suitcase" may also be brought in for comparison. That a cushion occasionally subsists needles is a normal dyadic relation and does not in this sense differ from Carl carrying a suitcase. Now, admittedly, statements of the latter sort, on the one hand, and the statement that a thing as thing subsists properties, on the other, are formally so thoroughly different as to render a genuine comparison impossible; nevertheless, a few allusions to circumstances that correspond remotely to both may be helpful in grasping already here something of the peculiar nature of the latter.

In statements of the first type, the relation of subsisting or bearing is between a certain something and, for instance, needles or a suitcase; and the question, admittedly already rendered obsolete by the type of formulation chosen here, as to what sort of something — or also, what sort of thing — subsists the needles or carries the suitcase, certainly makes sense. Its answer: a cushion or a curtain or our friend Carl. As for the problematic relation “a thing as such subsists properties,” that of which we say here that it subsists properties is simply ‘*nothing but that* which subsists properties.’<sup>m</sup> The question: what sort of thing is this property-subsisting thing as thing? is obviously out of place and makes no sense at all. I shall try another way of leading up to the same conclusion. One may, for instance, formulate that a thing as thing is something which subsists properties, and may compare this, for instance, with the statement that an oven is something which heats a room. Now an oven is obviously not ‘*nothing but that* which heats a room.’ It is an oven; and it must already be an oven, if it is even to get to the point at which it warms a room. In contrast, it makes no sense to say that a thing as such must already be, well, what? a thing as thing?, if it is to be conceivable that it subsists properties. It is exactly such a situation that we are trying to indicate when we say that a thing as thing is ‘*nothing but that* which subsists properties.’

That a cushion occasionally subsists needles, or that Carl over there carries a suitcase, is empirically verifiable. That a thing as such is ‘*nothing but something* which subsists properties’ is in no way something empirically verifiable.

The formulation used here “to be nothing but that which . . .” must be carefully distinguished from the common phrase “nothing other than . . .” “That is nothing other than fraud,” or synonymously, “that is nothing but fraud,” means that the matter in question is fraud, and that it is nothing else. This is a conjunction of two sentences and only appears to be *one* sentence. Whoever says “that is nothing other than fraud,” indicates, so to speak, the What, the *τι ἐστι* (namely, “fraud”), and then adds that any indication of a different What is incorrect. In contrast: that a thing as such is ‘*nothing but that* which subsists properties,’ is *one* sentence and not a conjunction of two sentences. When one says of a thing *as such* that it subsists properties, one does not indicate a property, an accident, but rather its What, its *τι ἐστιν*. It is therefore only two differently formulated indications of the same, if on the one hand one says that a thing *as such* (a thing *as thing*) is ‘*nothing but that* which bears properties,’ and if on the other hand one says that to bear, to subsist, properties is no accident of a thing *as such*, but is so to speak its What, its “substance,” its *οὐσία*.

5. Since by “thing” we mean here material things, it will be true, as

noted above, that a rock or a tree or a table is a thing. It might seem, therefore, as if "thing" were something like a genus, in relation to which "rock," "tree," "table," etc. are species. Now "plant" is, for instance, without doubt a genus, in relation to which "tree" represents a species; and from this would seem to follow a formal correspondence between plant and thing as genera of tree. In fact, however, there are profound differences here.

Thus it is possible, to begin with that example, to make a statement about trees *as* plants: "As plants, trees have such and such characteristics." If one compares this statement with the statement that "plants have such and such characteristics," then it is obvious that they are either both true or both false. Statements about trees as plants are, therefore, replaceable by statements simply about plants, and thus to a certain degree redundant. Therefore the following negation is also true: If B indicates an argument-place in which anything may be placed of which it is true that it is a plant, then it is by no means true, as was just indirectly pointed out, that statements about plants have to be statements about B's as plants. This is closely connected with the fact, for instance, that the statement "this-here is a tree" and the statement "this-here is a plant" are, in principle, equally primary; for, in principle, it is possible to know that something is a tree without having to know already that it is a plant, and vice versa. In comparison with this, the state of affairs surrounding statements about things is completely different.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, which may easily occur here, a certain detail must be permitted. Let me also state now that in the following A is to indicate an argument-place into which may be placed anything of which it can be said that it is a thing. Statements about A's, therefore, are equivalent to statements about things; and since, for example, "trees" are A's (are things), statements about trees are statements about A's (about things). Similarly for statements about B's. Since it is also true that trees are plants, statements about trees are also statements about B's, or, synonymously, statements about plants. The difference, with which we are exclusively concerned here, does not come to the fore until one compares statements about B's *as plants* with statements about A's *as things*. What one states about B's *as plants* is, if the statement is true, the same thing as what one states in true statements about plants. It is not, on the other hand, true that what one states about A's as things — assuming the truth of the statement — is the same as what one states in true statements simply about things. Of A's as things, for instance, of trees as things, it is true — if what I am attempting to expound here is correct — that they are 'nothing but that which subsists properties'; and that is, even formally, clearly something totally different from that which may be sensibly stated of A's, for instance, of trees.



This profound difference, which this exposition should make clear, comes to the fore in the following way. Since it is true that A's are things, the discussion of statements about A's as things has the same meaning as the discussion of statements about things as things; and the, formally, sole statement about things as things, namely, that a thing as such is 'nothing but that which subsists properties,' is in form and content completely different from any statement simply about things. The situation is, on the other hand, quite different in the case of statements about plants as plants and, in general — if C is a blank for genera which are formally in accord with the genus plants — in the case of statements about C's; for statements about C's as such, assuming their truth, are either statements about C's or they are nothing at all. Or the final clause formulated differently: statements about C's as C's are nothing other than statements about C's.

All the distinctions made in sections 4 and 5 may be said to have their source in the fact that all expressions which may be correctly substituted for the argument-places A, B, or C can be regarded as belonging to the object language, whereas the expression "thing" belongs to some level of metalanguage.

6. In immediate connection with the preceding, there are two things which should be examined.

a) To talk about the properties of a thing, for instance, of a tree, is readily familiar and has, evidently, meaning. To talk, on the other hand, about the properties of a thing as a thing, for instance, of the properties of a tree as a thing, is obviously not at all meaningful. In this regard, a question may arise which we must briefly discuss. Even though the discussion of properties of things as such is not meaningful, the word "properties" necessarily occurs in the statement than an A, for instance, a tree, is, as a thing, 'nothing but that which subsists properties.' And from this arises the question *which* properties are meant in the phrase "to be nothing but that which subsists properties." The correct answer is, without doubt, that it is the same properties which this very A does not, admittedly, bear, but rather "has." The properties, for instance, of which it may be said that a tree as a thing is 'nothing but that which subsists them,' are none other than those which a tree, as we are accustomed to saying, "has."

The difference between thing and property, the formal character of which is our theme, shows itself here to be the difference between that which is 'nothing but something which subsists properties,' and the properties of that particular substitution for A which we refer to at the given point at which we make a statement about A as a thing.

That the phrase according to which things "have properties" must be carefully distinguished from the phrase that a thing, as such, is 'nothing but that which subsists properties' has already been stressed.



As far as the having of properties is concerned, it may be characterized, among other ways, as follows: If, for instance, Carl is fat, one may also put it this way, that he has the property of fatness. The former expression, obviously, is the primary one.

And finally, even in the present context, it may already be helpful to point out that the properties which are continually being mentioned here are given by empirical intuition.

b) If we compare the exposition which in section 3 led to the conclusion that there is no normal relation between thing and property with what we have said in sections 4 and 5, then one notes that the latter arguments come to a similar result; the ways of getting there, however, are, in each of the two cases, utterly different. What rules out the existence of a normal relation between thing and property, according to section 3, is the reflection that, since thing and property are different, but nevertheless simultaneously one, it would not be correct to assign to both a "separate" existence, as would be legitimate if there were a normal relation between them. Now the expositions in sections 4 and 5 make it no less clear that there is no genuine relation between the thing as thing and those properties which must necessarily be mentioned there. But the deliberations as a result of which this conclusion is reached are, in form and thus also in content, utterly different ones. Thus, for instance, one could not say, on the basis of sections 4 and 5, what it could possibly mean either to assign or to deny "existence" to a thing *as such*. Since, on the contrary, in section 3, we talked about things and not about them as things, it is obviously possible meaningfully to assign existence to them. Another conspicuous difference is the following: On the basis of the expositions in sections 4 and 5, the relation in question, if it could only be a relation between that which is 'nothing but that which subsists properties,' and the properties of that particular substitution for A which is referred to when we talk about an A as a thing; and there would then have to exist a relation in the opposite direction as well; it would, then, also have to be possible to conceive that those properties "inhere" in (are borne by) that which is 'nothing but that which subsists properties.' But this is clearly not meaningful. The expression "inhere" is obviously only meaningful under the assumption that we are discussing things and not things as things.

7. As is well known, Bertrand Russell advocates the view that "... what would commonly be called a 'thing' is nothing but a bundle of coexisting qualities such a redness, hardness, etc."<sup>2</sup> One can also express this theory thus: that, in *that* sense in which one "commonly" — on p. 98, it is also "common sense" — speaks of things, no things exist.

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<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1940), p. 97.

I am referring here exclusively to Russell's expositions in the sixth chapter of his *Inquiry*. Even if Russell does not explicitly say so, there seems to me to be no doubt that he, certainly in this chapter, at any rate, uses the words "thing" and "substance" synonymously. I do not wish to investigate Russell's theory in its own right any further, even though it could also be of interest within the framework of our theme. For as a consequence of this theory, one comes upon the formal character of the difference between thing and property, when one says that it is the difference between a "bundle" that consists of qualities (a whole) and just these qualities of which it consists (the parts of the whole). I shall leave the virtues of this interpretation unquestioned and limit myself to bringing to light that which is, as Russell maintains, "commonly" called a "thing" or a "substance." In doing so, I must, admittedly, try to gain some information indirectly from Russell's text, which is rather brief in this respect.

To begin with, let me quote two pertinent passages. First, p.98.

Common sense regards a "thing" as having qualities, but not as defined by them; it is defined by spatio-temporal position. I wish to suggest that, wherever there is, for common sense, a "thing" having the quality C, we should say, instead that C itself exists in that place, and that the "thing" is to be replaced by a collection of qualities existing in the place in question. Thus "C" becomes a name, not a predicate.

Second, p. 97.

One is tempted to regard "this is red" as a subject-predicate proposition; but if one does so, one finds that "this" becomes a substance, an unknowable something in which predicates inhere, but which, nevertheless, is not identical with the sum of its predicates. Such a view is open to all the familiar objections to the notion of substance.

First of all: Either Russell himself or, in any case, according to him, "common sense" advocates the following view: Not only he who, for instance, believes the statement "this is red" to be a "subject-predicate proposition," but also he who believes things have qualities but are not defined by them, believes, *nolens volens*, in so far as he believes this, that a thing as thing<sup>3</sup> is an "unknowable something, in which predicates inhere." I cannot agree to the correctness of this claim. But this also I shall not pursue. For, what is mainly of interest in the view which, according to Russell, common sense advocates, lies elsewhere. The discussion here is apparently (see the last note) not simply about things, but about them as things. If we compare this with the expositions in sections 4 and 5, then it is not being said

<sup>3</sup> It is with the intention of making an interpretation that I am saying here "a thing as thing" instead of "a thing"; for otherwise I cannot understand how it could be meaningful to say that a thing, for instance, a tree, is an "unknowable something." But it is impossible to gain certainty in this interpretation. For if the expression "a thing as thing" appeared in Russell at all, he would doubtlessly not understand it in the sense I have developed here.

here that a thing as such is ‘*nothing* but that which subsists properties’; rather, explicit claims are being made for the contrary, that it is “*something*.” According to sections 4 and 5, it is not meaningful to ask what sort of a thing a thing as such is. It would seem to be meaningful, however, for common sense. It would then, if I am not mistaken in this conjecture, also be meaningful for common sense to ask in what sort of a thing the qualities inhere, just as, for instance, it is meaningful to ask in what sort of a thing those needles over there inhere; and the only difference would be that in the second case the question is, in principle, answerable, but in the first case it is not, because “we experience qualities, but not the subject in which they are supposed to inhere” (ibid., p. 98).

The view just sketched is the same as the one which John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (II, 23, §2), advocates regarding substance, when he says that it is “nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substantie*, without something to support them . . .” “Nothing but . . .” here means as much as “nothing other than . . .”

If what Locke says about substance and what, according to Russell, common sense also advocates were all that could be said in response to the inquiry about the essence of a thing, then I would wish full success to Russell’s attempt to be rid, once and for all, of such an unknowable something.

8. a) Up to now it has been said that a thing as such is ‘nothing but that which subsists properties.’ Another equally good, and as far as the content is concerned, possibly more revealing specification is that a thing as such is ‘nothing but that which remains when something else (the properties) changes.’ Even when, for instance, the occupants of a house change, something remains, namely the house. But a house is something and not nothing; and so it is not true that it is ‘nothing but that which remains when the occupants change.’ A further difference, which presents itself in this comparison, shall be noted only in passing. The occupants, of whom we say that they change, are the occupants of this house, are *its* occupants. But the changing properties are not those of a thing as such, are not *its* properties, but are rather the properties of that substitution for A to which reference is made, when one, as is necessary, speaks about an A as a thing.

I say “as is necessary” here for the following reason. Always assuming that A indicates an argument-place for which anything of which it can be said that it is a thing can be substituted, then it is true to say that to talk of a thing as a thing is meaningful only if it can always be replaced in the discussion by an A as a thing. To talk of an A as a thing is primary, and it is in this sense that I call it necessary to speak of an A as a thing. It is an only apparent objection to



this to point out that the discussion of a thing as a thing is meaningful.

The following may make this state of affairs even clearer. I must agree here with Frege that the task, to count what one currently sees, presupposes, if it is to be meaningful, the possession of common names. The task, for example, to count the tulips which happen to be in one's field of vision at a particular moment, makes sense and is, in principle, solvable. The same is true, for instance, of the two tasks to count the trees and the tables in one's field of vision. Assuming now that one has counted fourteen tulips, three trees, and one table, then it is also true that one has counted eighteen things; but the task simply to count all the things one currently sees makes no sense. How many things are this tulip in my hand? It will be answered that the tulip is obviously *one* thing. Far be it from me to maintain that this is not correct. Yet it should not be difficult to perceive that the tulip is *one* thing for us only because it is clear that it is *a tulip*.

That a thing as such is 'nothing but that which subsists properties' and that it is 'nothing but that which remains when something else changes' are, certainly, two different statements. If the "being nothing but . . ." were here the same as "being nothing other than . . .," then these two different statements could obviously not both be true. But the "being nothing but . . .," which is solely intended here, allows, in principle, that various different statements be equally true.

In connection with this the following should be pointed out. In relation to *content*, there is a close connection between the two statements, that a thing as such is 'nothing but that which subsists properties,' and that a thing as such is 'nothing but that which remains when properties change.' The two conceptions, of subsisting properties and of remaining when properties change, are here, so to speak, merely two different aspects of the same fact. Remaining is, one might say, the mode of subsisting. The following comparison may make clearer what is meant. One could say that a house subsists those (bears those . . .) that occupy it. Now if, as it happens, the occupants of a house change, but the house remains (that is, is not torn down), then it is obviously not true that the house's remaining (not being torn down) during a change of occupants is the manner in which it subsists those that occupy it. It would not make any sense to talk that way. It is not true here that subsisting occupants and remaining during a change of occupants are merely "two different aspects of the same fact"; and it fails to be true exactly for the reason that a house is not 'nothing but that which subsists occupants.'

In this context, furthermore, the following should be noticed. With a thing as such (that is, with an A as a thing), *only both together* approximately indicate the existing state of affairs — both: first, that a thing as such (an A as a thing) is 'nothing but that which subsists properties,' and second, that it is 'nothing but that which

remains when the properties change.' This same thing, which can be appropriately grasped only through both together, can also be specified. One specifies it when one says that a thing as such (an A as a thing) is 'nothing but something which changes.' Things, A's, change: trees, for instance, lose their leaves; but it is not true that a tree is 'nothing but something which changes'; it is indeed true, on the other hand, that a tree as a thing is 'nothing but something which changes.'

b) One could also express the question "What is a thing as thing?" with the words "What is the *thing*?" or, even better, with the words "What is the concept 'thing'?" — the concept or the notion "thing." We are not, thereby, asking about the concept of any given thing whatever, but about the concept "thing," about that, then, which we think, when we think about "the thing," or when we think about the concept "thing"; and the claim being made here is that we then think "nothing but that which subsists properties," and "nothing but that which remains when the properties change."

The concept "thing," as has been said, is not something like the concept of some thing, no matter which one. It would, by way of contrast, be appropriate to say that the concept "plant" is the concept of some plant, no matter which one. The concept "cause," for example, is also not something like the concept of a cause, no matter which one. There is a certain similarity here in form between the concepts "thing" and "cause." The correct answer to the question "What is a cause?" or "What is a cause as cause?" would probably be: Nothing but that which produces an effect. And thus, as one must distinguish between the thing and a thing, so also must one distinguish between the cause and a cause. A thing is certainly not 'nothing but . . .,' but rather something, for instance a rock. Similarly, a cause is not 'nothing but . . .,' but rather something, a state of affairs, an event, for instance, the event that there was just a flash of lightning.

Concepts like "tree," "rock," or "table" may be called empirical concepts, if one wants to let them be called concepts at all. This would be in accordance with the usage of, for instance, Kant, if I am correct. In any case, they are common names, whereas, for instance, "thing," "substance," "cause," or "effect" are not common names. As a common name, the empirical concept "tree," for instance, is the concept of any tree, no matter which one or, even better, the name of any tree, no matter which one.

Concepts like "thing," "substance," "cause," or "effect" are, as has been said, not common names, nor are they empirical concepts, at least not in the sense in which those others are, or are called, empirical concepts. This negative conclusion, however, is, in the current exposition, by no means equivalent to the conclusion that they are *a*



*priori* concepts in Kant's sense.

Since tulips, rocks, and other such things are being accepted as empirical concepts, and since, furthermore, it is recognized that the statement that tulips (rocks etc.) are things is meaningful and somehow correct, one might think that both taken together would be formally inconsistent with the opinion that "thing" is no empirical concept. That, however, is merely an illusion. It would not be an illusion if the expressions "thing" and "tulip (rock etc.)" belonged to the same language level. If, on the other hand, it is true that "tulip," for instance, is an empirical concept, and, if, moreover, it is true that, for instance, all tulips are plants, then, since the expressions "tulip" and "plant" belong to the same language level, this would indeed be formally inconsistent with the claim that "plant" is not an empirical concept.

9. In this last section the previous discussions shall be brought to an, admittedly, only preliminary conclusion.<sup>4</sup>

a) The question of the formal character of the difference — and therefore with also the connection — between thing and property was initially changed into the question about the formal character of the difference and the connection between a thing as thing and those properties of that particular substitution for A which is currently referred to when one speaks of an A as a thing. Looking back to the exposition in section 8, however, we will easily understand that this difference is the difference between a concept (more accurately, the concept "thing") and the sensibly perceived properties of the substitutions for A. One may say it even more concisely: It is the difference between the concept "thing" and the sensibly perceived things, for instance, the sensibly perceived rocks, plants, etc. Can we say something more about the essence of this difference and connection?

We think the concept "thing"; and we think it whenever we think, "nothing but that which subsists properties," and "nothing but that which remains when the properties change." The connection in question, therefore, could be that we think of the sensibly perceived things (rocks, tables, trees) as being 'nothing but something which changes.' But what could this mean? Obviously it cannot, indeed even merely for logical reasons, mean thinking, believing that the sensibly perceived rocks, tables, or trees, which are certainly not 'nothing but . . .,' are 'nothing but something which changes.'

At this point we can be helped along by a comparison that may at first seem a little peculiar. We stand at the window and see various things outside, houses, streets, men, women, policemen, and several

<sup>4</sup> I am well aware that the present study lacks some things that would be relevant to the treatment of this theme. Thus, to mention only this, it lacks a treatment of the difference between thing and property on the one hand and propositional subjects and predicates on the other.

other things as well. At the same time, we see that which we see there *as* a street-chase after a thief on the run or *as* the hurried hubbub of housewives before closing time. This does not mean that we think that what we see there are not houses, people, etc., but a street-chase. Much rather, it is that we see *and* think of that which we see and do not stop seeing *as*, for instance, a chase, as if seeing and thinking were here one thing. Sometimes one sees and thinks of that of which one is sensibly aware as something which is "going on," but does not know as yet what is going on. But then one unexpectedly sees and thinks of it *as* this or *as* that, and by doing so, believes one knows what is going on.

Discussions of this kind, which seem so familiar and yet so strange to us, can, in any case, shed some light on the logical structure of the statement that we see and think of the sensibly perceived things *as* 'nothing but that which . . .'

I think, however, that this last expression will also help us appropriately answer our main question: The formal character of the difference and, at the same time, of the connection between the sensibly perceived things, that is, the perceived trees, tables, etc., on the one hand, and the concept "thing" (or also, the perceived trees, tables, etc., *as things*), on the other, comes to the fore, if the previous expositions are correct, as the formal character of the difference between, on the one hand, the empirical perception of things, of trees, tables, etc., and, on the other, that peculiar unity of seeing and thinking of them as 'nothing but something which changes.' Herewith we have also indicated something negative, namely, that the formal character of the connection of the perceived and the concept does not, in this case, lie in the fact that we subsume the sensibly perceived things, that is, the sensibly perceived trees, tables, etc., under one concept "thing" or one concept "something which changes." This is here as little a subsumption in the usual sense of the word as it would be when one, while standing at the window, perceives, recognizes, and observes the houses, streets, men, women, policemen, and still more and, at the same time, sees and thinks of it as a street-chase after a thief.

To talk of A's, of trees, tables, etc., as of things has been allowed as meaningful in my exposition from the beginning. To be sure, it may be misleading, as follows from what has been said before. In the present context the possible confusion makes itself felt as the temptation to believe that we subsume trees or tables under the concept "thing" or "something which changes" in the same manner in which we subsume, for instance, trees under the concept "plant" or tables under the concept "piece of furniture." A statement like "some pieces of furniture are tables,"  $(\exists x) (\text{piece of furniture } x \wedge \text{table } x)$ , and a statement like "some things are tables,"  $(\exists x) (\text{thing}$

$x \wedge \text{table } x$ ), are only apparently of the same form. For the possibility of speaking of a table as a thing does not rest upon the subsumption of sensible data under the concept "thing," but grows rather out of the possibility of seeing an empirically perceived table and, in the same moment, thinking of it as a thing, as being 'nothing but something which changes.'

One could call something like a street-chase an intramundane event. It is something going-on *in* the world. The being-nothing-but-something-which-changes of all things *as things* is, to be sure, not an extramundane going-on; but one could say that it is a certain form of event and going-on as which the world presents itself.

I shall try to apply the approach sketched here to another example. That the concept "cause" is not the concept of a cause, no matter which one, and thus not a common name, has already been stressed. The same will be true of the concept "effect." I must be permitted here to move from the premise that we think the concept "cause," when we think, "nothing but that which produces something else"; and that we think the concept "effect," when we think, "nothing but that which is produced by something else." Now we perceive events sensibly, seeing, for instance, a flash of lightning and hearing a roll of thunder; and it happens that we believe, think, a certain event  $E_1$  (which is certainly something and not nothing) to be the cause — or the effect — of a certain other event  $E_2$  (that is also something and not nothing). But something different may happen as well: that one and the same sensibly perceived event is seen by us and simultaneously thought as being 'nothing but that which produces something else' or as being 'nothing but that which is produced by something else.' And in this second case, too, the aspect under which we see and think the events perceived by us might be said to be a certain form of going-on, as which the world itself presents itself.

b) If one considers that we have been led in our investigations to visualize the difference between the empirically perceived A's and the concept "thing" as a (to be intentionally vague) certain difference between intuition and concept, it does not seem far-fetched to think of Kant's famous theory according to which "intuition and concepts" are the "two fundamental sources of the mind," out of which "our knowledge springs," and that they therefore "constitute the elements of our knowledge."<sup>5</sup> The following, often quoted passage could, in particular, attract our attention.

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts.

Since an interpretation of Kant is not intended here, I would like, leaving much in the background, to give space to only one question



in regard to the quoted passage, namely the question, what could be meant by talking of intuitions which are “blind” without concepts, ignoring for the moment how Kant himself understood that phrase. How might one imagine a normally talented person, who perceives something with healthy senses and yet is, at the same time, “blind?” Could one not very well imagine someone who is not able to see and think in one the things and events which he perceives *as* this or *as* that? Of him, too, one could say, with Kant’s words, that he is not able to make his “intuitions intelligible to himself.” It may, however, be assumed as generally known that Kant understood the quoted passage completely differently; and I would like to conclude with some short remarks concerning the problems which seem to be implied here.

Since I have previously mentioned the concepts “cause” and “effect,” it is natural to remember that they — along with certain other concepts — are *a priori* possible, aprioric concepts. In my exposition the difference between *a priori* concepts and empirical concepts has not really played much of a role; but this does not imply any assertion concerning the possible philosophical relevance of such a distinction. A palpable opposition to Kant lies elsewhere; it lies in the fact that Kant thinks the way to make one’s intuitions intelligible is to “bring them under concepts,” to subsume them under concepts. And this subsumption represents for him one and the same action of the mind, no matter whether the concept under which the appearances are subsumed is an empirical one, such as the concept “tree,” or an *a priori* one, such as the concept “cause and effect.” For Kant, an empirical concept, say, a tree, is indeed — self-evidently — a different concept from, for instance, the concept “cause and effect,” but it is not at the same time *as concept* different, is not at the same time a “totally different” concept.<sup>6</sup> The same thing differently expressed: for Kant, empirical and *a priori* concepts are both species of the identical genus “concept.” When he says that intuitions without concepts are blind, or that the understanding is the faculty of concepts, this is equally true for him of empirical concepts as of *a priori* concepts. Carried along by this opinion, if I am not mistaken, he conceived the theory of the transcendental schematism. He set up transcendental schemata so that he could maintain (by their mediation) that the subsumption of intuitions under *a priori* concepts — however different it may appear compared with a subsumption under empirical concepts — is nevertheless still a subsumption in the same sense of the word “subsumption” as that under empirical concepts. Kant’s conception of the difference between “logic in general” and

<sup>5</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 74-76.

<sup>6</sup> I am borrowing this expression from Husserl, for instance: *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Book I, §13.

"transcendental logic" presumably also rests on this view. If the subsumption under *a priori* concepts were not for Kant a subsumption in the same sense of the word as one under empirical concepts, he might perhaps have hesitated to call his transcendental logic a logic.<sup>7</sup>

In opposition to Kant, my exposition is founded squarely on the view that such concepts as "tree," "table," etc., on the one hand — if one wants to call them concepts at all — and, on the other hand, such concepts as "thing," "cause," but also, for instance, such concepts as "street-chase-after-a-thief-on-the-run" are not different species of an identical genus "concept" but rather totally different concepts, so that the making-one's-intuitions-intelligible happens, in the last case, in the manner of that seeing and thinking, in one act, of them as this or as that; and that is not a subsumption in the usual sense.

Through the following observation, one can describe the thus indicated contrast somewhat more closely. "Thing," "cause," "effect," but also "street-chase" seem to be called concepts for the reason that we could evidently say that someone who perceives something and, in one act, sees and thinks it as . . . , conceives it as . . . . The phrase "conceive something as" seems here to be, in comparison with the expression "concept," the primary one. If, however, we are speaking of "bringing-something-under-a-concept," in the usual sense of "subsuming-something-under-a-concept," then the corresponding phrase "conceiving-something-as . . . ," if I am not mistaken, is not the primary one in comparison with the expression "concept"; here it is rather the other way around.

In closing, I wish to add the following remark: There is a noticeable difference between such concepts as "thing" and "cause," on the one hand, and such as "street-chase," on the other. To speak of the latter as an "empirical" concept suggests itself immediately, whereas one would in no case say this of the former. This so very noticeable difference can be maintained without falling back on the notion of the *a priori* by pointing out that conceiving-something-as-a-street-chase does not mean conceiving it as '*nothing but* a street-chase,' whereas whoever, for instance, conceives something as a thing conceives it as '*nothing but* something which changes.'

<sup>7</sup> I think that as far as what is sketched here is concerned, I can ignore the difference between pure and empirical intuition which is very important for Kant. It may also remain open here whether one can derive from his other assertions, or at least make probable, that the concept "thing and property" is for him an *a priori* or an empirical one.

#### Translation Notes

<sup>i</sup> For all quotations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* I shall, with one exception, hold to the translation by Norman Kemp Smith.

<sup>ii</sup> This translation of "besonderes Dasein" seems preferable to Smith's "a special existence."

<sup>iii</sup> Here and elsewhere, I have placed single quotation marks as "scope indicators" around some of König's longer technical phrases, so that the problem of misreading these may be kept to a minimum.



## FREGE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: MEDITATIONS ON HIS ESSAY "THOUGHTS"\*

Gerold Prauss

Translated by John McCumber

Frege, in decisive fashion, assigns to the theory of knowledge a task of its own, distinct from that of logic. This is all the more significant because the theory of knowledge then possesses as well a problematic distinct from that of the theory of science (*Wissenschaftstheorie*) — a discipline which today is beginning to understand itself more and more completely, that is, more and more as merely "applied logic."<sup>1</sup>

Frege expresses himself indecisively, however, as to whether this theory of knowledge constitutes a properly philosophical science or reduces to empirical psychology. Therefore the fact that Frege, in the course of his deliberations in his essay "Thoughts," arrives at results which imply a decision on this question as well must be seen to be all the more significant. Frege's contribution to the theory of knowledge is achieved with those results, not merely when they are tenable, but also precisely when they are not. It is achieved when Frege, precisely because he never relaxes the clarity and consistency of his thought, by his own results puts his own basic concepts into question and — knowingly or unknowingly — argues for another basic viewpoint, namely, that of Kant.

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\* Translated from "Freges Beitrag zur Erkenntnistheorie: Überlegungen zu seinem Aufsatz 'Der Gedanke,'" in, *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie* I (1976), pp. 34-61.

The article attempts to show how Frege, in his essay "Thoughts," makes a significant contribution to the theory of knowledge. It is especially interesting that Frege's reasoning ultimately leads to a restoration of the approach of transcendental philosophy, apparently without his having had a clear appreciation of this particular consequence of his views. The author has devoted many years to work in Kantian philosophy, and has published a number of books and articles on the subject.

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Stegmüller, *Probleme und Resultate der Wissenschaftstheorie und Analytischen Philosophie*, Vol. IV (Berlin/Heidelberg/New York: Springer-Verlag, 1973), p. 7.

Frege characterizes the task of the theory of knowledge with reference to logic:

Logic is concerned only with such grounds of judging as are themselves truths. To judge, insofar as we are aware of other truths as justifying grounds, means to infer. There are laws concerning this type of justification, and the aim of logic is to set forth these laws of correct inference. (*Logik* I, n 3)<sup>2-1</sup>

According to this, logic is concerned only with justifying truths in terms of entities which themselves are truths, or at least are thought to be truths; it thus in principle concerns only entities which themselves are already true or false:

If however truths can be known by us at all, this cannot be the sole type of justification. There must be judgments whose justification depends upon something else . . . and here is the task of the theory of knowledge. (*ibid.*)

As opposed to logic, which derives true or false entities only from other true or false entities, the theory of knowledge according to Frege is concerned to derive them from what is itself neither true nor false. Its task is to clarify what the origin of truth or falsity consists in — to explain how and whence entities that are either true or false arise in the first place.

Such a theory of knowledge would certainly have remained an impoverished undertaking if the basic view of it which Frege ordinarily put forth had remained his sole and last word on the subject. For according to this conception, the entities to which we normally attribute truth or falsity, namely sentences (K 344; T 4), have these properties only insofar as they formulate judgments. The basis for these, in turn, is the activity of thinking viewed as "grasping" of thoughts (K 344ff; T 4ff). And what is true or false in the strict sense is only these thoughts themselves. According to Frege thoughts are in principle distinct, not only from physical objects in the "external world," but as well, and especially, from what is in the psychological "internal world"; they must be recognized as a "third realm" distinct from both (K 351, 353; T 13f, 17).

Within the framework of such a conception, there would remain very little — in fact nothing — for the theory of knowledge to do. Such a theory, dealing with cognition only as such a "grasping" of thoughts, could make no contribution to an original derivation of true or false entities. For according to Frege, truth and falsity apply

<sup>2</sup> Here and in the following I cite the lesser writings of Frege which have appeared in the following collection: Gottlob Frege, *Kleine Schriften* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), herein K; Gottlob Frege, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Wissenschaftlicher Briefwechsel* ed. by Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach (Hamburg: Meiner, 1969), Vol. I, herein N. Page numbers without titles, for example, K 351, refer to the essay "Der Gedanke."

to individual thoughts themselves, independently of how or even whether they are “grasped,” and certainly not in virtue of such “grasping.” Thoughts, insofar as we think them, are by no means created by us (K 359; T 25). They are rather already given as complete in their “third realm” as true or false entities (K 371; T 43), to which we as thinkers “arrive” only subsequently (K 354n; T 18n). Whether in this we grasp a true thought or a false one depends entirely on the particular thought we grasp.

Frege certainly had a good argument for distinguishing thoughts from physical and psychological phenomena. They cannot be psychological entities, such as “ideas” (*Vorstellungen*),<sup>ii</sup> which as subjective and private require an individual subject as their bearer (K 353; T 16f). Since, rather, a single thought can be grasped by several — indeed, in principle, by all — subjects (K 351, 353; T 13f, 17), thoughts must be something intersubjective or objective. In contrast to psychological entities, then, a thought requires no individual subject as its “bearer,” and in this is more comparable to physical objects, the independent beings of the external world.

But thoughts are also, for Frege, fundamentally distinct from physical objects (K 351; T 14f). They do indeed belong, as do physical things, to the intersubjective or objective realm, and thus to that which in principle is accessible to all subjects (K 351, 353; T 14f, 17). But even so, such thoughts are a type of intersubjective or objective entity that cannot be perceived, and in this, they are more commensurate with psychological phenomena (K 353f; T 17ff).<sup>3</sup>

This argumentation gives Frege a basic viewpoint that can capture the impossibility of thoughts arising from, or being produced out of, physical or psychological entities. Against empirical scientists or empiricist philosophers who believe (or hope) that such beings as thoughts could ever arise from or be explained by physical phenomena such as “nerve-fibres, glangliar cells, stimuli, excitations, or transmissions of excitations,” Frege cogently declares:

If we stand by a river, we often see swirls in the water. Would it not be absurd to claim on behalf of such a swirl that it holds or is true, or that it is false? And if the atoms or molecules in my brain danced around, a thousand times more lively and active than the mosquitos on a fine summer evening, would it not be equally absurd to claim that the dance holds true or is true? (*Logik* II, N 156)

And in Frege’s sense we must today append: however deeply we may penetrate into microscopic areas of physical phenomena, where electrons or electromagnetic waves or whatever it may be “dance around” it can in principle never make sense to say that such a physical object is true or false. The same goes, however, for psycholo-

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<sup>3</sup> The significance of Frege’s important observation that psychological data cannot be perceived will be further discussed in the sequel: see below, n. 10.



gical phenomena, and thus in general for everything empirical. Even the "most elaborate ideational structures" are "no more true than they are false; they are simply processes, as the swirling of water is a process . . . An idea joined to an idea yields only another idea," a psychological phenomenon, and "no amount of artificiality or complexity of associating can change this" (*Logik* II, N 156f).

It does not follow, however, from the fact that thoughts cannot arise or be produced from physical or psychological phenomena that they cannot, as Frege believes, arise or be produced at all. It does not follow that they must rather exist as complete in a "third realm," like Plato's Forms, and that they can only be "grasped" or "comprehended" by thought in a receptive manner. This all follows only under an additional and ultimately empiricistic assumption, to which Frege is obviously inclined: that the empirical order of physical and psychological phenomena constitutes the only domain from which thoughts can, if they can at all, arise or be produced.

In any case, the idea that thoughts (which, after all, are in Frege's own conception non-empirical entities) could arise or be produced from something likewise non-empirical seems here to be far from Frege's mind. He rather holds strictly to the idea that thinking is a receptive "grasping" of platonically-conceived thoughts — and gets into difficulties with his underlying empiricistic assumptions. For because of the clarity and consistency of his reasoning, Frege cannot shuffle off the result that thinking, as "grasping," can in the final analysis only be a "mental process," and therefore something empirical — while, precisely through it, something non-empirical (thoughts) is to be comprehended:

But grasping certainly is a mental process! Yes! But it is a process on the boundary-line of the mental, one which therefore cannot be completely understood from a purely psychological standpoint.<sup>4</sup> Something is involved in it which is not, properly speaking, "mental": thought. And perhaps this process is the most mysterious of all. But, precisely because it is of a "mental" nature, we need not worry about it in logic. It suffices for us that we can grasp thoughts and know them to be true. How that comes about is an entirely different question, one which has hardly been grasped in its full difficulty. Usually we are content to smuggle thinking into ideation through a back door, so that we ourselves do not know how it really got in (*Logik* II, N 157, n).

There can be no doubt that, with this "entirely different question" which concerns "the process of thinking" as the "most mysterious of

<sup>4</sup> This latter remark is strongly reminiscent of Kant. In the *Prolegomena*, for example, he says "We are discussing, not the origin of experience, but that which lies in experience. The former pertains to empirical psychology; and would even then never be adequately explained without the latter, which belongs to the critique of knowledge, and particularly of the Understanding." Kant, *Prolegomena*, Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vol. IV, 1911, p. 304; or L. W. Beck, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), p. 51. In spite of this, it seems more probable to me that Frege arrived at this conviction on his own.



all" and as something which "has hardly been grasped in all its difficulty," Frege is again raising the problem of a theory of knowledge. It remains unclear, however, how and to what extent such a theory constitutes a proper philosophical discipline as distinct from logic, on the one hand, and from empirical psychology, on the other.

Even the zealousness with which Frege at one time wished to "second Cohen" in the view that "psychology is to be sharply distinguished from the theory of knowledge" remained ambiguous. The reason Frege gave then was that "knowledge as a mental process does not constitute the object of the theory of knowledge" (Frege, review of Cohen, K 102). Taking Frege at his word, the theory of knowledge should then be able to deal with knowledge only as thoughts, and would ultimately reduce to logic. But in the text cited above, the theory of knowledge is indeed supposed to have as object "knowledge as a mental process," that is, thinking as the grasping of thoughts, and would then again reduce to empirical psychology.

Nevertheless, the view with which Frege will overcome this residual "psychologism" is here heralded. For when he states critically, "usually we are content to smuggle thinking in through the back door," Frege has already (whether he is fully clear on the matter or not) given up his view that thinking is an empirico-mental process of the same type as ideation. It is to precisely such a "surrender" that Frege commits himself towards the end of "Thoughts" — to the view, namely, that thinking as the grasping of thoughts can be "nothing sensory," that it is rather "non-sensory" (K 360; T 26f), which implies as well that it be non-psychological, and hence, non-empirical.

It is important here to avoid a mistaken, if natural, understanding of this statement of Frege's, which finally leads him away from psychologism. In regard to thoughts as themselves either true or false, Frege has given up psychologism early on — at the high price, admittedly, of a Platonism in which thoughts are given as existing in complete form in a "third realm" as something intersubjective or objective. In this light nothing would be more natural than mistakenly to conclude that the later Frege with this view of thinking as non-empirical, merely brought his non-psychologistic views to completion by perfecting his Platonism. As Plato had to assume a special type of cognition for his Forms — *Noesis* — distinct from sensory *Aisthesis*, so Frege was (this view runs) ultimately required to assign to his thoughts, viewed Platonistically as non-empirical, a view of thinking as a non-sensible grasping, and thus as something similarly non-empirical.

The exact opposite, however, is the case. Frege's decision to view thinking as something non-sensory and hence non-empirical not only does not signify a completion of his Platonism; it constitutes, on the contrary, an approach from which he, had he carried it through,

could himself have overcome his Platonic view of thought and thus his Platonism altogether.<sup>5</sup>

This only becomes clear, however, when we examine more closely the arguments that finally brought Frege to his view of thinking as non-empirical and carry them a few steps farther than he did.

Frege is led to these arguments because, during the course of "Thoughts," he sees himself more and more required to discuss something he had obviously never examined before, namely perception.<sup>6</sup> If (as we have mentioned) a thought is supposed to be something that, as one identical thing, can be grasped by several individual subjects (indeed, in principle by all such subjects), then it is natural first to view it as on a par with "things" in the external world. For "a man who is still unaffected by philosophy first of all gets to know things he can see and touch, can in short perceive with the senses, such as trees, stones, houses." And such a person has the well-founded conviction that "someone else can equally see and touch the same tree and the same stone that he himself sees and touches," that such objects are intersubjective. On the other hand, such a person will quickly convince himself that such things as "thoughts" are not to be found among the perceptible beings of the external world: "obviously a thought does not belong with these things." But how can a thought "nevertheless, like a tree be presented to people as identical" (K 351; T 13)?

Again, given that thoughts are in no way present like things in the "external world," it is natural to ascribe them to the "internal world." For "even an unphilosophical person soon finds it necessary to recognize an inner world distinct from the outer world" to which belong, for example, his "feelings" (for instance, his "pains") and also his "sense-impressions" or "sensations," such as those "of green" (see K 351, 356f; T 13, T 21f). And this leads further to the question of how this psychological internal world, made up of things like "sensations of green" (which Frege, for conciseness, calls "ideas"), is distinguished from the external, physical world of things. It is in his attempt to answer this question that Frege sees himself required to

<sup>5</sup> That he did not carry this beginning further and thus did not fully recognize its potential obviously entails that Frege did not consistently hold to it. Thus, in 1919, about the time "Thoughts" was published, he could still write: "Both the grasping of thought and judging are acts of the knower and are to be assigned to psychology" (essay for L. Darmstädter, N 273).

<sup>6</sup> This becomes especially clear if we examine the *Nachgelassene Schriften* for writings which must have been preparations for "Thoughts" or *Logical Investigations* (see especially "Logik" I and II, as well as "Einleitung in die Logik," "Kurze Übersicht meiner logischen Lehre," "Meine grundlegenden logischen Einsichten"). It is remarkable that Frege's reflections on perception, which are among the best on the subject, do not appear in any of these preliminary works; they are present only in "Thoughts" itself. This suggests that they are a late and obviously ripe fruit of Frege's thought. Consequently, the Platonistic conception of thoughts, which appears comparatively early, must have been conceived by Frege without reference to a theory of perception. It follows that he probably formulated it entirely in terms of his theory of mathematics.

investigate perception. And he immediately formulates an insight whose importance can hardly be overstated: "how are ideas distinct from the things of the outer world" which one can perceive? "Ideas cannot be seen, or touched, or smelled, or tasted, or heard," in short: ideas cannot be perceived (K 351; T 14).

Put in terms of ordinary usage, this means first of all that it makes sense, and is understandable, to characterize this primary form of our external experience, for example, our seeing and hearing of things in the external world, as "perception." But precisely because of this it is senseless to use "perception" generically and to speak of an "inner perception" (perception of "internal" things, of ideas in the "internal world"), from which the original "perception" must subsequently be distinguished as "external perception." If our normal usage is to be retained as meaningful, the expression "perception" is and remains a genuine species-term which allows no other "species of perception" beside it. "Perception" alone thus means what the ultimately senseless expression "external perception" attempts to express — so that an expression such as "inner perception" could only indicate the contradictory idea of an "internal external perception."

That Frege in this allows himself to be guided by linguistic considerations is shown by the example he gives to support his view: "I go for a walk with a companion. I see a green field, I thus have a visual impression of the green. I have it, but I do not see it" (K 351, T 14). This manner of formulating examples, which is recurrent in Frege and is indeed typical of his procedure, is not to be misinterpreted as giving a mere (perhaps even arbitrary) stipulation. One could easily take this view. For not only does Frege in such cases never give any sort of "proof" or "substantiation" in the normal sense of the words; he often formulates things in a way which forbids us, from the outset, even to ask for such a "proof."

But Frege is not, in this, simply making stipulations. He is only trying to bring out something which has *already* been stipulated, namely, the sense that a linguistic expression has in normal usage. In such a procedure, in fact, nothing can be "proved;" it can only be "shown" in that we appeal, as Frege sometimes says, as immediately as possible to our "feel for the language" (*Sprachgefühl*; see "Begriff und Gegenstand," K 170; *Über den Begriff der Zahl*, N 95). In this, Frege is not thinking of "feeling" in the ordinary sense of the word, as something which could vary from person to person. The expression "*Sprachgefühl*" in German is rather the colloquial designation of what in Chomskian terminology would be the "linguistic competence" of the native speaker (and hearer) of the German language. It is then precisely what establishes intersubjective connections among individuals.



Thus, examples like the one just cited can only be adequately understood in terms such as this paraphrase:

I go for a walk with a friend along a green meadow. Since he also understands English, I can intelligibly say to him: 'I see a green meadow.' And he will also understand me if I add: 'in this I have the visual impression of green.' "

Here, however, the emphasis is on "have": concerning such an impression or idea, one can indeed say "I have it," but not "I see it."

That such linguistic considerations are an appropriate enough way to approach considerations of substance is shown by the fact that Frege here succeeds in bringing out in a plausible way a distinction previously seen and emphasized by Kant.<sup>7</sup> For Frege's statement that whenever we *see* something in the external world we *have* (but do not see) an idea in our internal world is equivalent, in Kantian terms, to saying that when we possess things as *objects* through perception of the external world, ideas are *given* to us which we precisely do *not* possess as objects, and which *never* become objective for us.

That both Frege and Kant in this way present the problem of perception correctly from the beginning, means that a further problem arises — whether they are aware of it or not. For if it is correct that ideas in the internal world form the basis for perception of things in the external world, but are not themselves perceived and do not become objective, then the question arises of whether such ideas can become objective at all and, if so, precisely how they can do so. Kant saw this problem and attempted to solve it with his theory of the "judgment of perception." He had difficulties in the attempt because, among other things, he was unable to free himself sufficiently from the idea of an "internal perception."

Frege, on the other hand, although he may have also seen the problem, certainly did not pursue it. But he would have had an advantage over Kant in that he was clear from the start that ideas are not perceptible, and thus that talk of "internal perception" or even of "introspection" is senseless and misleading. We do indeed have experience of an internal, as well as of an external, world, and thus have internal and external experience. But only the latter, according to Frege, is perception. Frege thus knows, at least in a negative way, what internal experience can *not* be: that such beings as ideas in the internal world cannot become objective through any sort of perception.

The reason why that is not possible lies in the nature of perception itself. It becomes clearer if the theory of perception for which both Kant and Frege have laid the correct groundwork is followed out. If

<sup>7</sup> In the comparison of Frege's and Kant's viewpoints I am presupposing, here and subsequently, the view of Kantian thought which results from my *Erscheinung bei Kant* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971) and *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974).



our perception of things in the external world is only possible on the basis of sense-impressions, which as ideas belong to the internal world; so, conversely, those sense-impressions or ideas cannot themselves be perceptions. They do not of themselves lead us out of the internal world into the external one. It remains true that sense-impressions are basic to perception: "sense perception has as a necessary constituent our sense-impressions, and these are a part of the inner world." But such

sense-impressions alone do not reveal the external world to us . . . To have visual impressions is not yet to see things . . . Having visual impressions is certainly necessary for seeing things, but not sufficient.

In this way, Frege becomes clear that in perception something else "must be added." This something, it follows, must be "not anything sensory," but rather something "non-sensory," namely the thinking which enables us to "grasp thoughts" (K 360; T 26f).

With this, however, Frege restates nothing less than the Kantian principle that "intuitions without concepts are blind" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A 51, B 75). For by this Kant only means that we do not "see" merely by having visual impressions, and that the (appropriate) concept must come into play as well. Such a concept, however, arises from the thinking of the Understanding and is therefore something non-sensory.

Frege's commonality with Kant only becomes fully clear when we consider what really motivates him to locate thinking along with ideas in perception, and with this to recognize such thinking as something non-sensory and non-mental as opposed to ideas, which are both. The reason for it consists only in that Frege, in the course of thinking about perception, gets clear on the following. If our perception develops from our ideas, but is nonetheless not a perception of an internal world but of an external one, it must be (in the full sense of the word) a "step" (K 358, T 23) which departs from the internal world merely in the sense that it moves beyond it towards the external world. That is why Frege also speaks appropriately of our perceptions as "excursions into the external world" (K 358; T 24), where he makes quite clear that the "step" of which he speaks is really to be understood as a "stepping over" (*Überschritt*)<sup>iii</sup> in which I move beyond my internal world and "win an environment for myself" (K 358; T 23), that is, gain an external world (*ibid.*).

Frege sees an indication that perception in fact entails the risk of such an "overstepping" in the fact that, in all our perceiving, we remain exposed to "the risk of error," that in every "excursion into the external world" "doubt never altogether leaves us" (K 358; T 23f).<sup>8</sup> And it is because perception for Frege can only be such a primordial moving from the internal world towards the external one

that he ascribes the "decisive aspect" of perception to thinking as something "non-sensory."<sup>9</sup> Otherwise, it would remain completely incomprehensible how the merely sensory, as a mere internal world of impression which we only "have," could on its own ever move beyond itself towards the external one.

In this alone, it is clear how close Frege is to Kant's approach. For not only can this kind of thinking, which in perception leads us beyond the sensory internal world out into the external world, not itself be anything sensory; it cannot, most importantly, be anything quasi-sensory, such as a receptive "grasping" or "comprehending." Though Frege here retains this way of characterizing thinking, he reduces it more and more to a mere externality. Indeed, the characterization and what it characterizes finally diverge so widely that they are contradictory. For Frege must ultimately ascribe to the thinking operative in perception a function that it could never fulfill as the receptivity of mere "grasping," but only as spontaneity.

It is thus no coincidence that the kind of thinking which in Frege's view is essential to perception should be characterized in a way which also fits in Kant's theory of perception. That the internal world is at the basis of our perception, but the external world becomes objective, means according to Frege that we must always submit our "ideas" to an interpretation via our "thinking." According to Kant, we must interpret our "intuition" in terms of our "concept." In both cases, what is actually interpreted does not become objective; something else does. To "interpret" the internal world of ideas then means to pass beyond it via our thinking, towards the external world of things. It is these things which are, strictly, "perceived" in such perception and become "objective" for it.<sup>10</sup> In

<sup>8</sup> According to Frege, it is essential for external experience as perception that, in moving beyond the internal towards the external world, it need not be true, but, in the case of perceptual error, can also become false (as noted by Freidrich Kaulbach in the Introduction to N, p. xxx; see note 11 below). Frege clarifies this in that he opposes to external experience, as true or false perception, internal experience. This, according to Frege, has the entirely opposite characteristic of never becoming false because of error; it can only be true: "I cannot doubt that I have a visual impression of green, but it is not so certain that I see a lime-leaf. So, contrary to widespread views, we have found certainty in the inner world . . ." (K 358; T 23f). Though Frege characterizes inner experience only negatively, as something that cannot be a perception, leaving open its positive character, he nonetheless here gives it an essential characteristic which on Kant's view also applies to the so-called "judgement of perception" as the form of inner experience.

<sup>9</sup> See K 360; T 27: "since the decisive factor lies in the non-sensible . . ."

<sup>10</sup> Here we see how correct Frege is when he remarks that experience of the internal world, or internal experience, cannot be perception of the internal world. For if perception is interpretation, and obtains the external world only in that it passes beyond the internal one, internal experience as "perception" of the internal world could only be so by passing beyond some other, yet "more internal" world. This is impossible, for such an internal world (which would have to consist, for example, in "sense-impressions of sense-impressions") does not exist. The nature of internal experience, which we so casually designate as "introspection" and thereby think ourselves to understand, shows itself consequently to be a difficult problem.

this activity, however, the interpretive thinking proper to perception must possess the kind of spontaneity with which, according to Kant, we “*a priori* aim at objects” as occasioned by the subjective elements of our sense-intuition (*Critique of Pure Reason* A 79, B 105).

Only when the full scope of these considerations of Frege’s are borne in mind can we see that in them he does not “perfect” his Platonism of thoughts, but that — forced by the nature of perception and by the rigor of his own thinking — he enters upon a road which leads away from such Platonism. Frege’s reason for positing thinking as something non-empirical is not the “thoughts” which are non-empirically present as complete in their ‘third realm.’ Rather, it is the empirical nature of the things we perceive in the external world which leads Frege to recognize in perception a form of thinking which, as non-sensible and non-psychological, must be non-empirical. This is shown quite clearly by the fact that Frege carries over this new conception of thinking from his analysis of perception, where he first lights on it, to the thinking of thoughts in general:

So, perhaps, since the decisive factor lies in the non-sensory, something non-sensory could also lead us out of the inner world and enable us to grasp thoughts, even where there is no co-operation of sense-impressions [that is, in non-empirical cognition of the non-empirical, as for example in logic and mathematics]” (K 360; T 27).

Because spontaneity is, ultimately, discovered anew in this newly conceived form of thinking — whether Frege is aware of it or not — his Platonism of thoughts must become fundamentally suspect. For once we have adopted a view of thinking as spontaneity, the question arises as to whether it would not be much more plausible to view thoughts as products of such thinking. With this, however, the non-Platonic view of Kant would have been arrived at, in respect both to thoughts and to the activity of thinking.<sup>11</sup>

In any case, Frege, in that he finally sees himself in his deliberations as forced to recognize thinking as something non-sensible, has definitely departed from psychologism and opted (on the basis of arguments) for at least the germ of the view that the theory of knowledge must constitute an independent philosophical discipline. In his analysis of perception, he discovers that our cognition appears in the world as an empirical fact, as does everything else empirical; but that it nonetheless, as something that can be true or false, relies upon thinking. This itself, as something non-empirical, is neither the object of logic nor a possible object for some empirical science. With this, Frege is well on the road to the Theory of Knowledge as a philosophical discipline — as what might be called a non-empirical science

<sup>11</sup> That Frege, in the course of his development and especially in his later period, closely approaches a Kantian viewpoint has been previously noted by Friedrich Kaulbach, in his Introduction to Frege, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, ed. cit. xxv-xxxiii.



of the empirical. Such a science, by reflecting upon empirical phenomena — upon cognition — in a way unique to itself, encounters a non-empirical dimension in this empirical field, a dimension in terms of which alone the empirical itself, as such, can be adequately understood.

The extent to which Frege distances himself from his Platonic view of thoughts in his analysis of perception, and approaches the Kantian view, is still clearer when we consider not just the activity of perceiving which we have heretofore emphasized, but the object perceived as well. In his analysis of perception, as has been shown, Frege must recognize thinking as something non-sensory, nonempirical, and ultimately as spontaneity. Only thus can he explain how in perceiving we move from the inner world to the outer. The spontaneity of thinking, however, renders it questionable whether such thinking can still be viewed as the mere “grasping” of thoughts which as either true or false are presumed to be present and complete in some “third realm.”

This suspicion is increased by considering that, according to Frege, truth or falsity (“error”) can apply to perceiving itself, in which we “pass beyond” the internal world towards the outer — and precisely because we pass beyond it (K 358; T 24). Frege understands such perceiving, insofar as it passes beyond the internal world, as thinking (K 358; T 26). As previously remarked, such thinking cannot be merely receptive “grasping”; but even apart from that, if we, like Frege, retain the vocabulary of “grasping” at all, it definitely cannot be a “grasping” of *thoughts*. For to be such, thinking would have to be directed upon thoughts, to “aim at” thoughts (K 359; T 26). But according to Frege, thinking rather “aims at” the things of the outer world, from which he sharply distinguishes thoughts, transferring them to the “third realm.”

And indeed, perceiving, in which thinking plays a decisive role, does not perceive thoughts; it perceives things. It follows that it is not because the thinking involved in it is a grasping of true or false thoughts that perceiving can yield truth or falsehood (“error”). Frege, in fact, does not refer this possibility to the idea that perceiving, as thinking, somehow “aims at” thoughts. He refers it instead to the circumstance that, as thinking, perceiving passes beyond the inner world and aims at things in the outer world (K 358; T 23f).

Once again, and still more clearly, we see how far Frege through his analysis of perception has been led away from his original conception of thinking and thoughts. Not only the receptivity supposedly proper to thinking as “grasping,” but the very thought it is supposed to grasp now threatens to disappear unnoticed in his analysis of perception. Frege here again retains his old view of thinking as the grasping of thoughts; but because he does, his whole view disin-

tegrates in internal contradiction. Ultimately, we may say, the type of "thinking" that Frege proposes in his new theory of perception as the "decisive" factor in perceiving falls apart into a sort of squint, with one eye on a thing and the other on a thought.

To the precise extent, then, that we try one-sidedly to retain Frege's old conception of thinking as a receptive grasping of thoughts, we must give up his new acquisition of a thinking that functions in regard to perception as a spontaneous "aiming at" things. That such a surrender would be at odds with Frege's analysis of perception can be corroborated further by examining again, more closely, how he conceives the relation of perceiving activity and what is perceived. That Frege in fact views thinking as it functions in perception as a spontaneous "aiming at" things can be shown from the fact that he sets to such spontaneity a definitely determined boundary.

Frege's view of the relation between perceiving activity and perceived object can best be seen from a discussion in which he chooses "that lime-tree" as an example (K 352; T 15f). He here broaches a fundamental problem, not merely of his own theory of knowledge, but of the theory of knowledge, as such. In this example, as in the earlier case of the meadow, Frege begins from a concrete conceptual situation, well known to all, in which we perceive a lime-tree. He starts with a discussion of expressions we use in such cases: "by using the expression 'that lime-tree in this question . . . ' I mean to designate what I see and other people too can look at . . ." (ibid.). The first thing to note here is that Frege's expression "that lime-tree" is more precisely written "that lime-tree . . . ," that is, it is a component expression such as would occur, for example, in a complete expression such as "that lime-tree is green."<sup>12</sup> In the use of such expressions as: "that lime-tree . . . ," according to Frege, there are "two possibilities": "either 'my intention is realised': or 'I fail to realise my intention.'" In both cases, says Frege, my intention was "to designate something with the expression 'that lime-tree'" (ibid.).

It should be noted that Frege is not here, as might seem at first glance, making a purely linguistic observation. Rather, with the help of such considerations, he is examining the corresponding reality: through considering the use of expressions such as "that lime-tree . . . ," Frege discusses the *perception* in regard to which we use them. Thus, the two possibilities — that I can realise or fail to realise my intention when I "aim at" something — also hold for perception.

This is in fact clear from Frege's theory of perception as we have

<sup>12</sup> The significance of this example, which will be discussed in the following, is masked by the fact that Frege discusses it within the context of the question "is that lime-tree my idea" (K 352; T 15), that is, in terms of the problem of solipsism. It is important to be clear that the example is significant independently of this. See, as well, the example of "my brother," (K 358; T 23), which possesses a like significance and independence.

so far treated it, that is, with regard mainly to the activity of perceiving. In such activity, we pass beyond our inner world and "aim at" things in the outer world, and in this can realise our intention or fail to do so; in contrast to inner experience, perception as an outer experience can turn out to be either true or false. Frege himself, in fact, formulates at least one of the two possibilities discussed linguistically in terms of "that lime-tree . . ." in regard to perception as well: "if my intention is not realized" is equivalent for Frege to "if I only think I see without really seeing" (ibid.), by which error of perception or sense deception is meant: "such mistakes do happen . . . By the step with which I win an environment for myself I expose myself to the risk of error" (K 358; T 23).

However, in the course of discussing these two possibilities — a discussion in which Frege quite plausibly sees perception as something that can become either true or false — he makes an unexpected conceptual leap. Indeed, it can only be characterized as an unsuccessful conceptual break-neck-leap, because in it Frege, in the course of a single sentence, literally falls head over heels into contradiction. He maintains that perception is something that can become either true or false just as long as he has only the activity of perceiving in view. As soon as he also looks at the object perceived, he gives up the two possibilities and maintains the opposite. In the case of "error," which in addition to the possibility of truth certifies the possibility of falsehood of perception, Frege suddenly says, "I have wandered into the realm of fiction without knowing it or meaning to" (K 352; T 16). And he repeats it: "We then, against our will, lapse into fiction" (K 358; T 23). The very term "fiction" (*Dichtung*), however has been introduced by Frege as a term for what, precisely, is neither true or false, however much it may seem to be (K 346f; T 8).

Error is thus suddenly no longer to be error; falsehood, no longer to be falsehood. And with this, perception in such cases is suddenly no more to be what is *either* true *or* false, but *neither* true *nor* false — in which Frege is contradicting his overall view that perception is in general either true or false. The reason for this, actually, is that he is here considering the object of perception as well as perception. He identifies this reason in saying that in such cases an expression like "that lime-tree . . ." does *not* "designate something," that *nothing* "corresponds" to such expressions, that in these cases "the designation 'that lime-tree' is empty" (K 352, 358; T 16, 23f). In sum: when he moves from considering the activity of perceiving, which is either true or false, to discussing what is perceived, Frege suddenly gets clear that in the case of falsehood, or perceptual error, an object of perception is not present at all — that in the case of perceptual error *nothing* is perceived. The view that perception



could be perception of *nothing* apparently gives Frege such a *horror vacui* that he overhastily denies any perceptual character to all such cases.

The haste and dismay can be pursued into the details of the text. Frege characterizes the possibility of truth in perception as when "my intention is realised, when I *designate something* with the expression 'that lime-tree'" (K 352; T 16, emphasis added). This means: when I *see something*. To be consistent, Frege ought to formulate the ensuing characterization of falsehood, or error in perception, as when "my intention is not realised, when I see *nothing* —" especially since he himself adds that in this "the designation 'that lime-tree' is empty." But Frege avoids this step, which would be logically consistent: he immediately makes a leap, which he regards as the true logical conclusion. He ought to have said: "when my intention is not realised, if I only think I *see* without really seeing" (*ibid.*; emphasis added). Instead of denying that we see *something*, Frege straightaway denies that we *see* at all, that perceiving is present at all. He thereby relegates these cases immediately to mere "fiction."

This decision, however, ultimately means nothing less than that Frege at this point in his theory of perception (a theory he began, at least, as a spontaneity theory), falls back into a receptive theory. He thereby entangles his whole theory of knowledge in familiar and unresolvable difficulties. On the basis of the spontaneity which he clearly locates in perceiving, Frege would have an opportunity, and a remarkably good one, to resolve the ancient and fundamental question of how cognition (in this case, perceiving) can be false and yet in the fullest sense be "knowing" or "perceiving." Basically, Frege is quite clear that to perceive falsely means to perceive nothing; for an expression such as "that lime-tree . . .," he says himself, is in such cases "empty." Frege thus cannot in principle retreat to the tactic of smuggling in an object for false perception by somehow convincing himself that if, in the above case, we do not perceive a lime-tree, we see something else and so in any case see something. In particular, Frege never takes the view that in the case of perceptual error we perceive, if not the external world, at least our inner one, namely the idea that we thereby have. This smuggler's path to an object for false perceiving is closed to Frege by his own good argumentation and insight into perceiving as moving beyond the internal world. That is why he quite consistently says with respect to perceptual error: "I *have*, of course, got an idea then, but that is not what the words 'that lime-tree' designate" (K 352; T 16 emphasis mine) — with which, again, nothing more is said than that I *have* such an idea, but do not see it — that it is *given* me but is not *objective* for me.

But Frege is unable consistently to maintain that perceiving falsely is equivalent to perceiving nothing; and this simply because he does

not remain consistent in the view that such perceiving, which he himself has already begun to conceive as a spontaneity, must be spontaneous enough to be comprehensible as a perceiving of *nothing*. Instead of this, Frege here again gives up the germ of his spontaneity-conception. He allows himself to be led by the connotations of receptivity present, misleadingly, in expressions like 'see' or 'perceive,' to a pure receptivity-view. This is the reason that Frege does not allow seeing or perceiving *nothing* to count as seeing or perceiving at all, and takes the view (in that he explains such cases as fiction) that seeing or perceiving must be the seeing or perceiving of *something*. For it is an obvious fact that there can be a reception only where *something* is received, whereas a so-called "reception of nothing" would from the outset be no reception at all.

In this Frege appears not to suspect that he is only repeating a mistake which, since philosophy's beginning among the Greeks, has implicitly or explicitly beset all philosophers who in accordance with the misleading senses of 'seeing' or 'perceiving' wish to understand knowledge as pure reception. The misconception has, moreover, been shown time and again since the Eleatics to lead consistently to the doctrine that such a thing as erroneous or false perception cannot exist, that in such cases there can be no 'knowing' at all.

A theory of knowledge that entails such consequences, however, must be fundamentally mistaken. Not only is our cognition often, in fact, false or erroneous; in many cases, truth arises in cognition as correction of falsehood or error, as perceptual errors show with special clarity. If error were not falsehood but, as Frege maintains, fiction, it would not be the kind of thing that can be corrected through negation and thus be converted into truth.

It is within the framework of the Kantian theory of experience, as far as I can see, that it first becomes clear that the mistake in such theories as Frege's must lie in the conception of knowing as receptivity. Their unacceptable consequences show that knowing can only be fully grasped by an understanding of it as spontaneous. But such a view takes a decisive step beyond Frege's preliminary conception of spontaneity in perceiving.

As was shown above, Frege is led to such spontaneity in that he sees in perceiving, not merely the possession of ideas in the internal world, but also the activity of thinking, which leads from the internal world to the outer one. As his further deliberations show, this thinking for Frege nonetheless 'leads out' of the inner world only in a partial sense. It stops halfway, so to speak, to let the outer world come to it; and we may say that, for Frege, thinking renders perceiving spontaneous only so far as enables it to be truly receptive. For according to Frege, things in the outer world are dependent upon our perceiving them to such a small extent that it would be better to say,

to the contrary, that perceiving is dependent upon them. For thinking, as described here, becomes perceiving only when, at the 'stopping-point' of its spontaneity, it does not remain "empty" but is fulfilled from the other side — through things which "correspond" to it. Otherwise the thinking in question, instead of becoming (false) perceiving, becomes fiction.

The view of cognition as spontaneous which results from Kant's theory of experience goes a decisive step further than Frege's in this direction — that is, with regard to things in the external world. For it contains the insight that, as opposed to the receptive sense of the word *Wahrnehmung* (perception), perception must possess a spontaneity which does not merely appear in the activity of perceiving and come to a halt, so to speak, in front of the perceived object. On this more radical view, the spontaneity of thinking extends to the inner constitution of the object itself. The perceiving is then not dependent upon the object, but, on the contrary, the object is dependent upon the perceiving.

This becomes clear if we compare Frege's theory of perception with the corresponding Kantian theory with particular regard to the object of perception. We indicated above that it was suggestive to characterize perceiving, in Frege's sense, as an "interpretation," using a term which also applies to Kant's view of perceiving as an outer experience. Both would understand by this a spontaneous and original moving beyond the internal world. That world itself cannot become objective for such interpretation, according to both Kant and Frege; only the outer world can.

The agreement between Kant and Frege is obvious, however, only so long as we consider the activity of perceiving by itself. It disappears immediately if we also take into account the nature of the perceived object. For then it becomes apparent that in the framework of the Kantian theory of experience, perceiving is grasped as "interpreting" in so fundamental a sense that the term cannot properly even apply to perceiving as Frege understands it.

For Kant, in contrast to Frege, perceiving as "interpreting" does not mean simply a moving beyond the internal world towards the outer one. Rather, in addition to this (and prior to everything), it means that objects perceived or perceptible in the external world exist only in the sense that they are what is construed or construable by such *interpreting* perception. Thus precisely as such perceived or perceptible objects they are inseparable from and dependent upon perceiving subjects.

With Frege it is otherwise. Just as certainly as he understands perceiving as a moving beyond the internal world towards the outer one, so does he in this conceive of things in that outer world as present there entirely independent of perceiving; they are entities to which



perceiving is added only later on, and on which, as perceiving, it is essentially dependent. So little is present here of that meaning of interpretation in the full sense of its "spontaneity," that there is really no justification for using the term at all. Indeed, because Frege relapses from his germ of a spontaneity-theory back into receptivity-theory, perceiving for him loses even the character of interpretation which was, at first blush, supposed to fit it.

This can be shown if we follow closely, from the Kantian point of view, how Frege's relapse comes about. Its starting-point is the ordinary perceptual situation in which, for example, we perceive a lime-tree. According to Kantian theory, to perceive a lime-tree means to construe it out of visual impressions; and the particular case of "seeing" a lime-tree means to construe it out of visual impressions. The contrast is already clear here at the outset between the receptive sense of perceiving or seeing something, and the spontaneous sense of construing it. It becomes even clearer if we assume with Frege that in every such case there are "two possibilities." In his attempt to formulate these possibilities, Frege falls into unresolvable difficulties with the expressions "perceiving" and "seeing," because of their receptive sense. In the case of "construing," because of its spontaneous sense, these difficulties are obviated from the start.

Following on this, Frege says that in all cases of perceiving or seeing the possibility of truth exists — the possibility that we do in fact perceive something (for example, the lime-tree). In Kantian terms, this means that we in fact construe something, or that our interpretation is true. Problems arise, however, with perceptual error. For as opposed to the possibility of truth, in which we see *something*, the possibility of falsehood properly means that we see *nothing*. The receptive sense of seeing, however, immediately renders it questionable what it could really mean to see nothing and yet to see, to receive nothing and yet to receive. This is why Frege rejects this and affirms straight-away that in such cases we "only think we see, without really seeing," that to see nothing means not to see. With this comes the claim that perceptual error is not error at all, that falsity is not falsity; for such cases contain, not perception (which is either true or false), but really only fiction (which is neither).

No difficulty at all arises if we become clear in the Kantian sense that nothing is equivalent to construing nothing. And this itself can show that we are not smuggling anything in under the expression "construing," which avoids the difficulties of "perceiving" from the start. For the intelligibility, indeed obviousness, that "perceiving nothing" in the sense of "construing nothing" gains under the Kantian interpretation is analogous to the case of "achievement," in which it is possible to "achieve nothing." Even here, it is possible to go further and make the move corresponding to Frege's move from

"seeing nothing" to "not seeing." For to "construe nothing" is indeed equivalent to "not to construe." And this is the crucial step because, precisely in contrast to that wrong decision, it is the correct one. In the case of "not seeing," it being the seeing itself that is negated, it is denied that vision or perceiving, that is, any sort of entity that is true or false, is present at all. In the case of "*nicht erdeuten*" (not construing), however, the negation in no way applies to "*erdeuten*" (construe) as such; it pertains much more to the "*er*" in "*erdeuten*" and in no manner to "*deuten*." It only denies that a successful interpreting (*Deuten*) took place!<sup>v</sup> It not only does not deny, then, that "interpreting" was present, but confirms it. For only where an interpretation has principally taken place can we have successful or unsuccessful interpreting — are we able, that is, to assert or deny the truth or falsity of an interpretation.

Thus, it is the expression "not seeing" which leads to the untenable view that in the case of perceptual error perceiving is not present at all; that nothing true or false is present, and thus that not even interpreting (in Frege's sense) takes place. It is as if, in the case where we "achieved nothing," there was not even an attempt. On the other hand, "not construing" [*not successfully interpreting*], in place of "not seeing," leads to the tenable conclusion that even in the case of perceptual error an interpreting takes place, and that there is thus present an entity which is either true or false.

We see as well that the receptive sense of "perceive" is connected with the fact that expressions like "see" appear to be quite simple, and thus mislead us into thinking that seeing itself is a simple phenomenon. And, in fact, a purely receptive seeing would have to coincide with the simple obtaining or having of visual impressions. The complex expression "construe" [or "interpret successfully"] however, makes explicit what is only implicit in simple terms like "see," namely that seeing as well must be a complex phenomenon. Not only according to Kant, but on Frege's view as well, non-empirical thinking, in addition to the receptive possession of sensible ideas, has a part in seeing or perceiving. This means, however, that such thinking, together with these ideas, constitutes a complex total phenomenon. Its particular complexity is also evident in the fact that such seeing or perceiving, which interprets ideas via thinking, is either true or false interpreting. This is explicit in our use of "construing," by which we mean "successful interpreting," and thus "true interpreting."

Only the explicitly complex perceptual expression "construing" can be denied in a way which leaves the fundamentally interpretive character of perceiving unaffected. In the case of simple expressions for perceiving like "seeing," a denial leads to the inadequate view that in the case of perceptual error there is no perceiving or interpret-

ing present at all.<sup>13</sup>

In general, the following has resulted. In spite of his overtures towards a spontaneity-view of perception, Frege allows himself to be misled by the receptive senses of "perceive" and "see" and relapses to a receptivity-view. Even so, he thinks it through consistently to the final conclusion, which is untenable and shows the untenability of the whole viewpoint. But precisely in this Frege develops, indirectly and unknowingly, a powerful argument for the view that the problem he is discussing can only be resolved by thinking through to its conclusion his starting points for a spontaneity theory. That Frege does not do so — that he in fact does not even retain these starting points — is perhaps due to the fact that, in so doing, he would ultimately have reached consequences apparently wholly foreign to him.

That Frege is so ready to deny the character of erroneousness or falsehood to perceptual errors is ultimately due to his clarity on this: such perceptual entities could only be true or false insofar as they possess a relation to objects. And here we see Frege's general conviction that all assertions that are either true or false presuppose the existence of objects which they are "about" (see, for example, "Sinn und Bedeutung," K 148).<sup>v</sup> The unresolvable difficulties of this conviction, however, are quite evident in the case of perception and, again, particularly in that of perceptual error. For this is a type of error, or falsehood, which shows that perceiving itself always occurs as something that is either true or false. Frege, at first, understands it as such, and ascribes this character to it because he views it as a moving beyond the internal world into the external world, and thus as a way of relating to objects. But by "objects," Frege has in mind the empirical things we "mean" in perceiving (K 352; T 16), just as in general, by the objects upon whose existence assertions, as either true or false entities, are to depend he has in mind precisely the objects these assertions are about. In the case of perceptual error, no such empirical object is to be found. And, continues Frege, with complete consistency, in such case no relation can be taken up to an empirical object; there can, then, be no perceiving, no true or false entity. There can only be a fiction.

With equal consistency we may also conclude, from the premise (difficult to refute) that errors in perception do take place, precisely the reverse. We would then conclude that in perceiving, even the erroneous or false variety, a relation to an object is established — but that this object is not the empirical thing meant and therefore not an empirical object at all. Frege understands perceiving as a thinking

<sup>13</sup> It further follows in this conception that perceptual expressions like "see" are in no way "achievement words," as is frequently said today following Ryle. This view as well remains within the framework of the misleading, receptive sense. Perceptual expressions are rather words which only *pretend* achievement.



which passes beyond the internal world and, in germ at least, views it as a spontaneity. It must, we can reason, in fact be so spontaneous that it takes up a relation in this non-empirical sense to something, on the basis of which it can then apply itself to something (or to nothing) in the empirical order. This second (and opposed) chain of reasoning, which identifies this "non-empirical something" as the correlate of such a relation, should have seemed plausible to Frege also in that he had already found himself required to posit such relation-establishing thinking in perceiving itself, viewed as non-sensory and non-empirical.

With this consequence, however, which Frege does not draw but which results cogently from his starting point toward a spontaneity-theory, his original standpoint is left completely behind, and a fully Kantian one is reached. For it is precisely this 'non-empirical something' that Kant calls the "non-empirical object" or "transcendental object." He views it as what is set forth in a fundamental and spontaneous conceptual "projecting" which we as subjects must achieve *a priori* in our thinking in order to obtain, on its basis, such things as objects and an external world. Empirical objects as perceived or perceptible in that external world can only be viewed, according to Kant, as items construed or construable; and this means, in turn, that they can only exist as empirical concretions of that "non-empirical object" by means of sense-ideas. Such ideas, then, are interpreted in the activity of perceiving by our thinking and thus moved beyond from the outset, in favor of the "non-empirical object" thereby projected *a priori*. Only in relation to such a "non-empirical object" do we then have the possibility of interpreting truly or falsely in our perceiving, and thus of construing either something or nothing in the empirical sense.

[Its ability to deal with cases of perceptual error or falsehood is one reason for approaching the view that thinking can generate thoughts, as opposed to the Platonistic view that it merely grasps them.] We can also formulate a second. On the view of perceiving as interpreting, such a thing as thought could arise only as some true or false interpretation, which we achieve ourselves through the spontaneity of our thinking. This would be the less astonishing if the spontaneity of thinking in perceiving were not restricted to the production of interpretations, but extended to the perceived object, that is, to what is construed. That thoughts, as true or false interpretations, are produced by us would no longer be so incomprehensible if even things themselves can exist only insofar as they are construed or construable by us, that is, are (in part at least) produced by our interpreting of ideas, and hence by us.

Most importantly, it would then become comprehensible that our thinking, as the thinking of true or false thoughts, in perception

still does not obtain these thoughts, but the things, as what is perceived. For if perceiving a thing is equivalent to construing it, it is clear that although in the course of interpreting through thinking a thought is produced, it is only a means to construing, that is, objectifying, something totally different. In perception, not only does the idea which the interpreting "passes beyond" not become objective; neither does the interpreting itself or the thought produced in it. What becomes objective is alone what, *with the help* of all of these, is construed or perceived: the thing. Everything perceived, in that it is construed, is construed *as something*, is always perceived as something. This is why perceiving, as interpreting, always has a judgmental or assertoric structure (as in: "this is a lime-tree"), and must in the full sense of the word have a cognitive character. Yet in all of this, the only "object" is a thing, like the lime-tree.<sup>14</sup> Still, on the other hand, it is the interpretation itself, and the thought produced in it, that bring this about; and it requires only a slight change of outlook to make this thought, which as the mediating factor in the objectification of the thing remained in the background, appear itself as object in the place of the thing. And the manner of its appearance shows, moreover, that it becomes objective as something, produced by subjects, which mediates objects.

We need only to move from "this is a lime-tree" to "that this is a lime-tree . . ." in order no longer to be talking about a thing. For one cannot complete this sentence by saying, "that this is a lime-tree is a thing"; there are in fact only two ways to complete it, ways the equivalence of which is very instructive. One can either say, "that this is a lime-tree is true," or "that this is a lime-tree is a fact." The equivalence of these two ways<sup>15</sup> indicates clearly the ambivalent position that thoughts occupy, relative to subject and object, because through their production a subject is able to mediate an entity as an object by construing it. We see here the extent to which something subjective, like a thought, can be constitutive of an "objective" thing. On this account thoughts seem to exist independent of thinking subjects, as "fact," alongside the things of the external

<sup>14</sup> Here we see another difficulty into which Frege falls because of his relapse to the receptive view of perceiving. On the one hand he views expressions such as "that lime-tree . . ." as used to formulate acts of perceiving. On that view expression would have to possess, as does the true or false perceiving itself, the full form of an assertion and mean the same as "that is a lime-tree . . ." On the other hand, he views "that lime-tree . . ." as a mere grammatical subject, from which an assertion would result only in the form of a completion by "that lime-tree is green" or something similar. Further analysis of the use of expressions such as "that lime-tree . . ." would doubtless reveal that the earlier understanding, which first results from Frege's theory of perception, is correct. The attempt to view such expressions as mere grammatical subjects arises solely from the effort to create an object for an assertion before anything true or false is said, in order to avoid the embarrassing case (for a receptive-theory) that in falsehood no object is present.

<sup>15</sup> Only here can we appreciate how correct Frege is when he says, offhand, "a fact is a thought that is true" (K 359; T 25).

world, or even as the "third realm." And it appears that we only find all these different constituents in our world at all because we constitute our world, in our thinking, to form an indissoluble union of subject and object.

As such a unity, the world can only become comprehensible if we realize clearly that a fundamental aspect of these various constituents is non-empirical. On the subjective side, we have non-empirical thinking; on the objective, the non-empirical object. Such a non-empirical dimension can only become a topic for philosophy — in this case for the theory of knowledge. In this, philosophy reflects, in a unique way, on the empirical phenomena of true or false knowing or perceiving, and on the (likewise empirical) known or perceived object. It discovers, in this way, a non-empirical dimension within the empirical region itself. Only in terms of this non-empirical dimension is philosophy adequate to an explanation of the empirical order; and only because of it does philosophy, as the theory of knowledge, become an independent, non-empirical science of the empirical.<sup>15a</sup>

That such consequences should come from beginnings in Frege's philosophy is the more remarkable because Frege is one of the founders of modern logic and of the modern "theory of science" as applied logic. The latter, in particular, equates thinking as something that is either true or false to a "factual process," and thus understands it as something empirical. It is then exclusively the empirical sciences, first and foremost psychology,<sup>16</sup> which are qualified to deal with it. Frege makes clear the impossibility of such a view in his thoughts on the theory of knowledge; and it is a small wonder that this same theory of science cannot avoid, on the other hand, accepting "facts" and "states of affairs" as "non-concrete entities" along with the concrete things in the external world. With this, it affirms (as did Frege with his "third realm" of thoughts) a "Platonism" or "Platonic hyperrealism" which can only be skirted — not evaded — by a notational "trick."<sup>16a</sup> [Such "evasion" is, on these terms, an impossibility;] Frege, though unclear about this impossibility,<sup>17</sup> made an important contribution to a more radical resolution of the problem in his epistemological reflections.

With reference to both, Frege, although he is to be counted among the founders of theory of science, must also be recognized as having

<sup>15a</sup> I have attempted to carry further this theory of knowledge, which Kant as well as Frege begins, in my *Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> Wolfgang Stegmüller, *Probleme und Resultate der Wissenschaftstheorie und Analytischen Philosophie* (Berlin/Heidelberg/New York: Springer-Verlag, 1969), Vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>16a</sup> Op. cit. pp. 253f, 260.

<sup>17</sup> See note 11 in the above.



gone beyond it. And if such theory of science did so recognize him, it could no longer claim to liquidate the theory of knowledge by allegedly replacing it piece for piece or (insofar as that cannot be done) by handing it over to the empirical sciences. The theory of science would then have to recognize, in addition to itself as mere applied logic, the theory of knowledge as an independent and specific philosophical science (*Wissenschaft*) — or at least as the beginnings of such a science.

This would require, further, a re-examination of global pronouncements against a non-empirical “thinking consciousness” or “transcendental subject,” and a re-evaluation of the contrary view that the world as a unity only “articulates” itself in that it is “relative” to such a subject.<sup>17a</sup> A further consequence would, perhaps, be the winning of an understanding of self and world that after all differed somewhat from the ominous and desolate outlook which the empirical order and empiricism urge upon mankind.

#### TRANSLATION NOTES

<sup>i</sup> Quotes of “Thoughts” are from the translation by P. T. Geach in Gottlob Frege, *Logical Investigations*, P. T. Geach and R. H. Stoothoff, trans. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), herein T, except for that on p. 15.

<sup>ii</sup> In translating the ever-baffling *Vorstellung* by “idea,” I am following Geach, op. cit.

<sup>iii</sup> To avoid the metaphorical connotations inherent in the English “overstepping,” *Überschreiten* will be translated as “moving beyond” except where it is contrasted with *Schreiten*.

<sup>iv</sup> “*Erdeuten*” means a successful interpretation, one that has a positive result. “*Deuten*” leaves open whether the interpretation succeeds or not. Regrettably, there appear to be no two terms in the English language that stand in this relation to one another.

<sup>v</sup> Frege, “On Sense and Meaning,” in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, trans. P. T. Geach and Max Black (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), pp. 63f.

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<sup>17a</sup> Stegmüller, op. cit. Vol. 2, 15.

## TOWARD THE FOUNDATION OF A TRANSCENDENTAL THEORY OF HISTORY\*

Hans Michael Baumgartner

Translated by Frederick S. Gardiner

1. *The nature of the transcendental inquiry.* The present uncertainty in the determination of the basic concepts, the task, and the procedures of historical science is occasion to inquire into the possibilities, limits, and meaning of historical knowledge. This inquiry presupposes that the question concerning history as such — in the classical formulation, concerning its essence — is not to be avoided and bracketed but is rather to be brought into the center. This procedure precludes naively following everyday opinion and assuming that history is simply what takes place in space and time, what just happens, regardless of its occurring in the past, the present, or the future. The inquiry must rather go much deeper and discuss the problem of the structure and organization of the knowledge of such a thing as history; it must ask how and under what conditions historical knowledge can be thought of as possible at all. In such an inquiry it is implied that there is a basis in knowledge itself which allows us to trace confused notions and complexes of such notions back to their underlying meaning, elucidate them, and bring their structure to light.

The posing and elaboration of the question concerning the conditions of the possibility of history arise out of the Kantian tradition

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\* Translated from "Thesen zur Grundlegung einer transzendentalen Historik," in, Hans Michael Baumgartner and Jörn Rüsen, *Seminar: Geschichte und Theorie: Umrisse einer Historik* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 274-96.

The present treatment establishes the basis for a transcendental account of history analogous to the Kantian critique of reason. As an attempt at a critique of historical reason it treats the question as to how knowledge of history is structured and constituted — how and under what conditions it is to be conceived as possible at all. With reference to Kant there is first developed the problem of the complex constitution of the object which history treats (as transcendental analytic), and secondly a transcendental dialectic which attempts on the basis of the outlined theory of constitution to penetrate and master the confusion which arises unavoidably with the natural and at the same time hybrid use of the concept of history.

of transcendental philosophy. The end in view is the outline of a transcendental theory of history. By means of a genetic-analytic method, such a theory discloses the conditions and origins of our knowledge of history. It thereby critically establishes rules of usage for the words "history" and "historical"; in other words, it establishes the legitimated use of the notion of history. The idea of a transcendental theory of history aims at a critique of historical reason. Analogous to the Kantian critiques, such an undertaking would have to include a doctrine of elements with both a transcendental aesthetic (theory of historical time)<sup>1</sup> and a transcendental logic (analytic and dialectic), as well as a transcendental doctrine of method. In the present context it is not possible to discuss why Kant himself did not proceed in this manner and why neither Dilthey nor Neo-Kantianism attempted a foundation of the humanities, or social sciences, in this direction. It does have to be pointed out, though, that a critique of historical reason must build upon the results of all three of Kant's critiques; it cannot restrict itself to the transcendental analytic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* alone. Otherwise, a fallacious accommodation or a fallacious opposition ensues all too readily between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of history — between natural science and history. Particularly in its transcendental analytic, a transcendental theory of history must do justice to the fact that its primary subject matter and domain of experience is neither inorganic nor organic nature; nor is it the domain of the practical ethical will: What experience means for a transcendental theory of history is neither the merely mechanistically nor even the teleologically interpreted world, nor is it exclusively the world of the fulfillment of ethical duty; it is rather the human world of experience in its totality, where the above-mentioned perspectives interpenetrate in manifold ways. A transcendental theory of history, therefore, addresses itself in the first instance, as a transcendental analytic, to the problem of the complex constitution of historical subject matter. Secondly, by developing a transcendental dialectic based on the transcendental analytic, it attempts to untangle and eliminate the confusion unavoidably resulting from the natural and at the same time hybrid use of the idea of history. As transcendental dialectic, the so conceived theory of history is both a theory of as well as a solution to the dialectical illusion of history.

The following outline of a transcendental foundation of historical

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<sup>1</sup> The transcendental aesthetic is mentioned in this context for the sake of completeness. I refer to the perspective of the problem of time — essential, in my opinion — in connection with the points to be considered for a transcendental analytic. An interesting, and, I think, fruitful approach to a theory of historical time, drawing upon phenomenological considerations and considerations pertaining to narrative theory, is to be found in the treatment of K. Röttgers, "Zeit in Geschichte" (Paper delivered at the 11th German Congress for Philosophy, Göttingen, Oct. 4-9, 1975). In: *Logik-Ethik-Theorie*, ed. by G. Patzig, E. Scheibe, and W. Wieland (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1977), pp. 429-36.



knowledge is, however, not exclusively oriented on the Kantian corpus and the formal construction of the three critiques of reason. It brings in — more or less tacitly in the present context — reflections, results, and, above all, presuppositions from the transcendental tradition of historical theory extending from Kant by way of Droysen to Dilthey, Rickert, Simmel, Troeltsch, and Max Weber. These presuppositions, which can also be understood as characteristics of the transcendental approach and procedure, can be summarized as follows:

(1) The transcendental analysis of historical subject matter is oriented primarily on the methodologically reflected procedures of historical science. It analyzes their propositional schemas and discusses their implicit logical presuppositions.

(2) The scientific knowledge of history, however, is simply the instance *par excellence*, or paradigm, in which, because of its methodological transparency, the basic concepts and fundamental structures of historical knowledge or consciousness can be relatively clearly exhibited.

(3) The transcendental analysis aims at the fundamental determinants of our knowledge of history in general. The usual distinction between history (*Geschichte*) and historical knowledge (*Historie*), the distinction between objective and subjective history, is here of secondary importance; for even objective history can only be conceived of as knowledge, not as something independent of it. What is always intended as the objective content of history in the manifold historical forms up to and including historical science, is a project of knowledge, a fundamental construct under the *a priori* conditions which determine and establish all concrete knowledge with respect to the object, the method, and the interest.

(4) Thus everything that appears as history is indebted to a particular constructive mode of apprehension of the spatio-temporal reality given through the knowledge of the empirical. This apprehension refers back to man's *a priori* interest in reason and in the bestowal of meaning (*Sinngebung*). Conversely, everything that can be determined as spatio-temporal reality is capable of being apprehended and interpreted as history, that is, as an historical event. Although this mode of apprehension presupposes the perception and knowledge of the empirical, it is not identical with them.

(5) Regardless of what is understood as history, therefore, or of the things that are furnished with the adjective "historical" ("geschichtlich" bzw. "historisch"), considered with respect to their scope, they are not the certainly indispensable elements and occurrences of the empirically observable world with its causal connectedness, but rather patterns of meaning constructively produced by an autochthonous bestowal of form — a bestowal of form *sui generis*.

These patterns are impregnated with meanings by virtue of a singular kind of value reference; they are by no means accommodated to the unbroken succession of spatio-temporal occurrences which characterizes the chain of events of empirically observable reality.

(6) History is therefore neither a copy-image nor a doubling reproduction of that which occurs, but rather a specific, constructive organization of spatio-temporal elements, processes, occurrences, and actions, imparting meaning and significance. Although the interpretative construction of reality as history presupposes the constitution of the empirically concrete human world as its basis and material, it is by no means identical with it.

2. *The foundation of historical construction.* In order both to fix the reference points for the transforming construction of spatio-temporal reality into history and to guarantee in principle the intersubjective validity of the process of construction, a transcendental theory of history is in need of a fundamental philosophy which makes it possible to establish the *a priori* conditions to which the historical construction is subjected *a priori* as the necessary conditions of its possibility — conditions which it must therefore satisfy in every concrete instance. From the transcendental standpoint, a fundamental philosophy of this kind would have to provide the basic features of a fundamental anthropology in two respects: (1) as a critique of theoretical reason which in determining the structure of finite knowledge at the same time determines the outline, that is, the possibilities and limits, of the human world of experience; and (2) as a critique of practical reason which allows for the interpretation of the idea of freedom not only as the absolute criterion of human action, but of man's bestowal of meaning as well.

Which fundamental *a priori* determinants of the human world of experience could be won in this manner? If the *Critique of Pure Reason* is read as a reflection upon the conditions of man's self-knowledge as an individual rational creature who is also finite, it would, as a theory of finite knowledge, in view, let us say, of Fichte's extension of the Kantian critique of pure (theoretical) reason, render recognizable the basic formal dimensions of the human world of experience in nature (world relation) and society (intersubjectivity). From this perspective, the *Critique of Practical Reason* could, as a theory of practical knowledge, portray the categorical imperative as the absolutely basic anthropological norm. Kant's formulation of the imperative, "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only,"<sup>2</sup> could without difficulty be formulated as a principle of evaluation and meaning related to the human world of experience in nature and society.

From the basic fundamental-anthropological determinants outlined above result the reference points of historical construction in their formal completeness: The relation of man to nature and society; and the basic practical interest in the human dimension of human existence, guiding every historical construction. Both factors (the *a priori* frame of reference as well as the *a priori* interests in the humanity of man) are thus the implicitly operative coordinates of the process of construction resulting in what we call history. The human world of experience, embracing both nature and society, forms the theoretically complete substrate upon which the construction is *materialiter* based; the humanity of man and of his relationships in this world of experience forms the *a priori* practical perspective. In roughly this sense it was still possible for Rickert to say that history has to do with structures of meaning to which cultural values adhere.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, this idea of a structured system of (albeit) formal values was not capable of realization. The historicity of the different organizational forms of human worlds of experience, as well as the relativity of values and their hierarchical arrangement, proved to be compelling counterarguments. Nevertheless, the theoretical kernel of his idea of culture can be retained. Both factors of the fundamental-philosophical anthropology explicated above are contained (although undifferentiated) within it. With regard to them, the suspicion of cultural relativity and variability cannot be raised in the same fashion: the dimensions of the human world of experience are culturally invariant alone by virtue of the fact that they establish the concept of culture to begin with. Furthermore, the imperative of humanity obtains its validity (as does all knowledge at once abstract and reflexive) not from the factual acknowledgment of it but rather from the fact that acknowledgment of it can rightly be demanded of all human beings. This demand is based upon the invariant fact of intersubjective communication, and is therefore itself not culturally dependent for its own establishment.

But the two coordinates of the historical construction designate at best, to use a geometrical comparison, the compass and ruler on the one hand, and two-dimensional space on the other; they do not designate the concrete medium in which, or with the help of which, figures can be constructed in an intuitively visible manner. The

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<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Paul Menzer, Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vol. 4, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1911), p. 429; or *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung: Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften*, 2nd. ed., rev. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913); Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, 3rd. ed., rev. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1915); and Rickert, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine Einführung*, 3rd. ed., rev. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1924).



blackboard or paper is still missing, which, as the schematization of the surface, so to speak, first makes the figures representable and visible. The medium for the historical construction is the basic figure of the narrative, possible in every natural language. When we narrate something, we talk of the fates and events of the human world of experience in nature and society, we apprehend them as a meaningful connection of events, we select the essential and report on an event possessing human meaning and significance. In short, when we narrate, we view the occurrences in an historical perspective and formulate historical accounts. When we think of something as a possible narrative, as a humanly meaningful connection of events, we presuppose a connection of events that is capable of narration, that is, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The historical bestowal of form shows itself to be a narrative construction - a construction, that is, establishing connections and patterns of meaning upon the fundamental structure of the human world of experience schematized by the narrative intention. What it brings about is an original narrative synthesis, an *a priori* narrative schema, that forms the basis, or the condition of the possibility, for the concrete narratives which make up the empirical subject matter of history.

3. *Aspects of a transcendental analytic.* The first part of a transcendental logic is, in the Kantian sense, a theory of the empirical subject matter of history. As an analytic not only of the fundamental concepts but also of the basic principles of historical knowledge, it reconstructs the necessary conditions and presuppositions which form the basis of the historical mode of apprehension. Hence it has the task of analyzing the logical grammar of the narrative process and determining its formal constituents. Since I have already undertaken a first approximation of this (following A. C. Danto and J. Habermas both in an attempt oriented on the problem of historical continuity,<sup>4</sup> and in taking a position with respect to the problem of historical objectivity<sup>5</sup>), I will restrict myself in the present context to a brief summary of the points most important for the outline of a systematic analytic.

The first and decisive point of consideration is the fundamental difference — the hiatus — between the human world of experience and history. This would be the place to recall J. G. Droysen's distinction between "affairs" ("*Geschäfte*") and "history" ("*Geschichte*"). In accordance with this distinction, "first a certain

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Hans Michael Baumgartner, *Kontinuität und Geschichte: Zur Kritik und Metakritik der historischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1972).

<sup>5</sup> Compare Baumgartner, "Narrative Struktur und Objektivität: Wahrheitskriterien im historischen Wissen," in *Historische Objektivität: Aufsätze zur Geschichtstheorie*, ed. by Jörn Rüsen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), pp. 48-67.

manner of reviewing what has occurred"<sup>6</sup> makes it possible for affairs to become history. Analogously, it could be said that the material substrate of narrative accounts is formed by events and occurrences spatio-temporally localizable within the transcendently constituted human world of experience in nature and society. History and narration do not accommodate themselves smoothly to these events and occurrences; on the contrary, they destroy the continuity of the unbroken flow of the life process. It is not first on the level of historical science that we perform (albeit more or less unconsciously) a constructive act of reflection, but already in the immediate apprehension of experienced reality as history. In this constructive act of reflection we interrupt the continuity of life in order to establish a continuity of meaning above and beyond the ensuing breaks, by means of a new bestowal of form from points of orientation provided by definite meanings and evaluations. G. Simmel was the first to develop this idea of the destruction of the continuous life process. He also exhibited the difference between the reality of life and history, as well as the constructive character of historical knowledge and its autochthonous bestowal of form.<sup>7</sup> Oversimplifying somewhat, one could say that we ourselves never live historically; nor do we live *in* history; however, we always, or for the most part, do live *with* history.

A second essential point of consideration has to do with the distinction between temporality and historical time. Human life and actions are structured by the ecstatic modes of temporality (analyzed by Heidegger) in accordance with which the dimensions of the anticipated future and the past thereby disclosed overlap and interpenetrate in the present of the respective unity, or pattern of life. If one interprets this interpenetration of the temporal dimensions as the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of human existence, thereby understanding history as a (derivative) mode of the historicity of existence, then one unwittingly confuses a condition of the historical construction with history itself. The temporalization of human existence out of the future and the recollection of the past determined thereby, is a transcendental structure of the world of experience, not of history. Temporality, therefore, is at most one of the factors constituting our interest in history. By first projecting the dimension of the past, temporality discloses the possibility of a construction dealing exclusively with the past. Historical time is the earlier and later of the past itself and not the unity of the past and the future in the present.

<sup>6</sup> Johann Gustav Droysen, *Historik: Vorlesungen über Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der Geschichte*, ed. by R. Hübner, 4th printing (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), "Grundriß der Historik," §45: p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Georg Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine erkenntnistheoretische Studie*, 5th. printing (Munich & Leipzig: Duncker & Humboldt, 1923), pp. 55ff.

This asymmetrical nature of history with respect to the temporal dimensions of past, present, and future has been convincingly set forth by A. C. Danto in his analysis of narrative sentences and the conditions of their truth.<sup>8</sup> We recount narratives solely about the past; their specific character is retrospectivity.

A third essential point of consideration results from the fact that the past is, metaphorically speaking, constantly extending and expanding. Consequently the content of the past is also changing. If narrative descriptions in Danto's sense are descriptions of earlier past events in the light of later past events, then the past is not a qualitatively complete world in itself, but rather is in principle open in view of newly entering events and the new characterizations of the past made possible by them. However, if history is such a constant reinterpretation and rearrangement of the past in temporal structures and narrative contexts, which cannot be projected *a priori*, then it is clear that there cannot be a definitive history of even a single past event or complex of events, not to mention the history of *the* past. Hence in view of the open future, all narrative accounts of the past, and that means all possible histories, are open to revision in particular and in principle.

A final point for consideration essential for our context concerns the constitutive relation of historical subject matter to values, elaborated primarily by H. Rickert.<sup>9</sup> Only that is narrated which possesses significance in one respect or another. "Significance" is understood here in the sense of that which is worthy of being remembered and communicated — that which is essential. It is possible that the essential and significant has already been touched upon in earlier accounts that the succeeding narrator or historian has before him, but this does not alter the fact that this material must again be originally judged and evaluated with respect to its possible significance if it is to be taken into consideration in later accounts and narrations. To this extent, the later narrator does not simply carry on with past accounts in a continuous manner. Although the earlier account did have the character of a narrative, for the more recent historian it is merely a document and source to be evaluated critically. This is the reason not only for the fact that history actually is constantly being written anew, but also for the necessity of so doing. Hence the value reference of documentary material from the past is always just the substrate for history and not history itself. It is first re-awakened, as it were, and becomes history again, by the acknowledgment of the subsequent narrator. History has no other mode of existence than

<sup>8</sup> Compare A. C. Danto, *Analytische Philosophie der Geschichte*, trans. J. Behrens (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1974), pp. 292ff, esp. 315, 319-20.

<sup>9</sup> Compare Rickert, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*, pp. 54ff: see also Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, pp. 84ff.



the living present of the narrative recollection. That also means, however, that the specific evaluation depends on the evaluative viewpoint and frame of reference of the later narrator. For this reason the past as history is also ambiguous with respect to the evaluation. Consequently, evaluations of the past are not only possible as merely particular judgments; they are also (to the extent that they do not affect the regulative idea of humanity itself) dependent upon the consensus of contemporaries. They are therefore only provisionally valid. Rickert's idea of an objectively constitutive value system — a value system that becomes increasingly enriched and hierarchically differentiated in the course of history — is not capable of realization. It seems to me that his concept is forced to make an inordinately strong assumption, whereas it suffices for the constitution of the historical object to adhere to the above outlined fundamental anthropological norm, grounded as it is in the structure of finite knowledge itself. The concept of this norm guarantees the general possibility of legitimate evaluation and ensures that the processes and events of the human world of experience can, in principle, be apprehended from the perspective of values and therefore portrayed as history in narrative construction.

To summarize the main points: The historical object is a narrative constructed upon the human world of experience, which is transcendently constituted in the dimensions of nature and society. It is always particular and retrospective, made possible by an original narrative synthesis, and oriented, in the last analysis, on the fundamental anthropological norm of mankind as an end in itself. History, therefore, deals exclusively with the human world of experience. This does not mean, however, that historical narration has to do solely with human subjects and their actions; on the contrary, all elements of the human world, up to and including the most general and complex formations, can be the subject matter of historical accounts. This is possible, of course, only under the condition that these factors can be portrayed unambiguously on the plane of spatio-temporal events or sequences of events — these alone being capable of serving as a substrate for narrations. This means that historical knowledge can and must be conceived of as knowledge that is empirical and in principle subject to revision. It possesses a structure based on *a priori* conditions, but no content that can be constructed *a priori*. A pure science of history, therefore, is only possible as a formal science.

4. *Problems and tasks of a transcendental dialectic.* The concept of a transcendental dialectic of historical knowledge is oriented on Kant's analysis of the dialectical illusion that results from a fallacious (because realistic) interpretation of the transcendental ideas generat-

ed by reason's faculty of deduction. If it is a structurally conditioned dynamic of reason to search for the totality of conditions (the unconditioned) in every conditioned thing, then, according to Kant, the only possible ideas in accordance with the three kinds of syntheses, namely, (1) the soul (subject), (2) the world, and (3) the transcendental ideal (God), are all necessary regulative ideas but not real and objectively given objects of knowledge. It is the almost unavoidable hypostatization and reification of these ideas that first leads to paralogsms, antinomies, and faulty deductions — in short, to that confusion of reason whose different forms Kant characterized as “sophistication . . . of pure reason itself.”<sup>10</sup> Kant's theoretical solution of the problem does not eliminate the quasi-natural character of the illusion, yet it does put an end to being deceived by it. This solution consists in the insight that totality in all its forms can only be thought of [legitimately] as a regulative idea; it does not impart objective knowledge, but it is constitutively related by its regulative function to the expansion of all our knowledge.

Because of the confusion in our historical knowledge arising from a natural and yet hybrid use of the notion of “history,” analogous to the sophistications of reason described by Kant, I would like to propose treating both the problem of the whole, or totality, of history, and the problem of particular historical totalities in accordance with the Kantian problem-solving strategy. In the present context, of course, this can be considered simply as the presentation of a program and not as its execution. The latter would have to differentiate and portray in detail the historical paralogsms, antinomies, and the idea of an absolutely real history (taking the place of God) above and in all histories. Here it may suffice to point out that the problems connected with the idea of a totality of history could easily be arranged and discussed in accordance with the Kantian architectonic as (1) problems of the historicity of the knowing subject (paralogsms), (2) antitheses in the historical process such as the antithesis of freedom and necessity (antinomies), and (3) the fallacious absolutizing of the one all-encompassing and universally determining history (transcendental ideal). Decisive, however, for the foundation of the program and for the preparation of a systematic classification and treatment of the problems mentioned, is the critical exposition of the difficulties ensuing from an unreflected application of the idea of totality in the area of historical knowledge. In the course of such an examination, the main tasks of a transcendental dialectic of historical thinking can be formulated and fixed in such a way that the recourse to Kant's problem-solving strategy can be seen to be justi-

<sup>10</sup> Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Philosophische Bibliothek (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956), A 339; B 397; or *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martins, 1965), *ibid.*

fied in terms of the subject matter itself.

If we ask, then, in which sense history can be thought of as a totality, or whole, four different meanings can be conceptually distinguished:

(1) History may mean a totality which includes not only the events occurring in it but also the knowledge of these events and their totality. History then appears as a unity of being and knowledge, bearing speculative features, and raises a fundamental doubt concerning the knowledge of this very unity on account of its dependence on change and alteration. From this view of history stem all of the paradoxes of (relativistic) historicism, which inhibit the possibility of rational discourse about history and historical knowledge. A solution to this difficulty seems possible only by giving up this inconsistent notion of an historical totality. In any case, it must be ensured that the knowing subject as such, although it too is always entangled in historical situations, is not thought of as itself historical, or at least not as historical in the same sense as the object of its knowledge. This presupposes above all that the totality be restricted to the transcendently constituted object, that is, to the historical entity. History would then be a totality which does include knowing subjects, but not in the sense that the conditions of the possibility of the knowledge of this totality would be conditioned by the totality itself. If the difference between the totality and knowledge of the totality is not taken into consideration, that is, if the knowing subject as such is historically objectified, then these faulty conclusions arise in the area of historical knowledge which, parallel to Kant, can be characterized as paralogisms of historical reason.

(2) The apprehension of history as a totality may also mean that the historical entity is conceived of as a totality of meaning in which, after the fashion of the hermeneutical circle, the individual parts receive their meaning from the whole and, conversely, the whole has its meaning only with reference to the parts. The historical entity "French Revolution," for example, would thus be a complexly structured whole possessing meaning and significance. If one is content with this formal designation of an historical whole (which corresponds to the narrative structure of an historical entity), then such a characterization poses no problem. Historical knowledge does not get itself into difficulties with respect to such totalities until it is a question of fixing their meaning in terms of content. It is then seen that the imagined totality, in relation to its components, is constituted solely by considerations of value; thus the totality owes its origin to a previous value commitment determining a specific selection of events. This value commitment itself remains exposed to competition with others. Yet Rickert's solving of this problem by means of a philosophical value theory — a theory intended to establish a sys-



tematically ordered and hierarchically arranged value system as the basis for all philosophical considerations of history — proved to be unsound. Not only the relativity of what are taken to be universally binding values, but also the problematic status of a realm of validity, made this course appear theoretically impossible. Contrary to Rickert, therefore, historical totality had to be divested of the ontological status of a *given* form of meaning (*Sinngebilde*), to be retained at best as an implication of historical construction. It was also necessary in this connection both to relinquish the concept of value in the sense of an ontologically characteristic form, and to relate in each case the concrete evaluation to the regulative ideal of a humane existence with respect to nature and society. Value commitments do not originate from an insight into an ontologically questionable realm of values, but from the judgment of the concretely given in the light of the *a priori* determinable guidelines of the idea of humanity as an end in itself. Historical wholes of this kind can therefore only be understood as unities of meaning constructively generated by narrative synthesis — as constructed totalities — which furthermore represent nothing other than particular narrative and temporal structures complete in themselves — “temporal wholes”<sup>11</sup> in Danto’s sense of the term. Their critical analysis belongs, therefore, in the domain of the transcendental analytic.

(3) The situation is different if the historical entity as a totality is apprehended not only in terms of its content but also in the form of its development as a totality, so that the single stages of its becoming are also interpreted and made understandable precisely by, and exclusively out of, the totality of a developmental meaning. The difficulty with such a view of historical totality consists primarily in the fact that here the spontaneity and freedom of acting subjects is completely absorbed by the overarching content of meaning and development, and the agents must appear solely as the bearers of meaning for a totality which, for them, takes on the character of necessity. Understanding history in the sense of such developmental totalities gives rise not only to the antinomy of conformity to historical laws and individuality. Historical reason finds itself in a state of antithetical confusion, for the existence of both freedom and necessity in history can be proved. This condition cannot be eliminated until, together with the insight into the constructive character of historical interpretation, it can be made clear that the historical entity does not receive its necessity from the actions and occurrences which are its elements, but from the interpretation, evaluation, and resulting selection of events; these always bind the actions and events to a connected whole *post facto*, hence retrospectively. History itself is there-

<sup>11</sup> Danto, *Analytische Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 394; or *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1965), p. 248.

fore neither necessary nor free; at most, those events which have to do with the acting and decision making of agents are necessary or free. However, all events, including these, belong to the substrate of history and are not already history itself. An illusion of necessity does arise from the narrative construction of the past, but this illusion is dispelled upon recognition both of the particularity of this construction and of the possibility of including the same events in the most divergent accounts. Historical antinomies, therefore, arise from a fallacious reification of the ideas of meaning and totality to a necessary connection of events. Only the restriction of the idea of totality to the particular and solely retrospectively possible narrative construction remedies the antithetical condition of historical reason and avoids the fallacious opposition of necessity and freedom in the area of historical processes. As a result of these considerations, it not only becomes understandable why the historical entity is thought of time and again in theoretical conceptions of history as an individual totality and as a process developing within a context of meaning; these considerations can also show that such characterizations by no means have objective reality but are rather to be understood as formal implications of every narrative construction.

(4) If one pursues the idea of a totality of process beyond single and delimitable historical connections in the direction of the context of meaning and development of an all-encompassing universal history, then the transcendental dialectic is confronted with the final and most difficult problem of historical totality: the problem of the context of all contexts of meaning, the problem of the history above and within all histories. History as a totality does not refer here merely to the totality of the unity of meaning of any one historical entity and its special form of development; it refers to the connection and interpenetration of such totalities of meaning and process resulting in the diachronic totality of the one universal history. The problems (as perplexing in this connection as picture puzzles) are those of the absolute beginning and end of history in its entirety, the problem of its unity, the question of the history of all histories, its process of development, and the models according to which the single phases or developmental stages of this encompassing history are outlined. These are the problems of history as *omnitudo realitatis*, of an idea of history which is supposed to be all in all, the fundamental and absolute reality, the final and all-inclusive horizon — in short, a history that should be thought of as analogous to Kant's transcendental ideal. Since I have dealt critically with the problem of the naturally conceived totality of history in a number of places and from different perspectives,<sup>12</sup> here I will merely repeat the main

<sup>12</sup> Compare Baumgartner, *Kontinuität und Geschichte*, pp. 47ff, 229, 263, 320ff; U. Anacker and H. M. Baumgartner, "Geschichte," in, *Handbuch Philosophischer Grundbe-*

point of my thesis quite generally and without further exhaustive argumentation: The totality of history cannot be thought of as an objectively given real process; therefore it cannot be thought of as knowable reality. It must rather be thought of solely as a regulative idea for the amplification and completion of our historically reconstructing knowledge with its interest in meaningful human orientation. These deliberations, which are oriented on the generally familiar problems of a philosophical theory of history, converge (following Danto) with a critical analysis of the concept of the narrative. The transcendental analytic, which demonstrates the historical entity to be a construction based upon narrative synthesis, and thus merely particular and retrospective, renders impossible the idea of a realizable narrative to end all narratives, or history consummating all histories. The insight that history as a total process extending from the past through the present to the future has no objectively real meaning results in the impossibility, not only of a classification of universal history determinable once and for all, but also in the impossibility of retaining as realizable the idea of the history of either a single complex of events or of the history of the past. Consequently, universal history is on the one hand restricted to past events and, on the other, must be accorded the character of hypothetical narrative constructions functionally dependent, as it were, upon the diagnosis and evaluation of contemporary life familiar to the "universal historian." Unless it proceeds altogether uncritically, the blueprint of such a history is the evaluated anatomy of the present unfolded to stages in history. Structures of contemporary life, which are either analytically reconstructed or even adopted according to criteria of plausibility, become objectified into stages of past processes of history and form the frames of reference for the various narrative accounts of events that can be shown to have occurred in the corresponding epochs. Finally, these structures function as an orientation for the present with respect to that which is possible and desirable in it.

Within the framework of a transcendental dialectic, therefore, it would have to be investigated which various models have appeared in, say, the traditions of philosophical and religious views of history, and according to what guiding idea the present in its structures, and the course of history, respectively, have been interpreted. Subsequently, a critique of these models, and of the regularities imputed to the course of history by them, would have to be undertaken in order to investigate or determine the conditions under which models of this kind have *de facto* been accorded meaning and significance, and to determine under which conditions they can *de jure* be accord-



ed such. Particularly the dialectical illusion of a future that can be prognosticated from the previous historical trend would have to be analyzed, and its merely superficial plausibility both demonstrated and dispelled. This would be the main place to discuss the justification and the scope of the clearly biologicistic principle upon which all of these theoretical constructions are implicitly or explicitly based, the principle, namely, that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny and that therefore phylogeny could be reconstructed from ontogeny. In spite of wide reaching differences in detail, with respect to this basic principle the same structure is exhibited by most philosophical models of the development of history: organologicistic-biologicistic theories oriented on anthropological constants or on life stages, transcendentalistic theories of idealism based on self-constitution of rational consciousness, and dynamic theories of social evolution oriented on societal formations. An initial step to avoid being misled by these models might consist in exposing their underlying circle, demonstrating their primary practical interest in the bestowal of meaning, and restricting their claim to universal knowledge. In a second step it must and could be demonstrated that history as interpreted by such models cannot be thought of as a necessary process and hence cannot be used to prognosticate the advance of history. A third step could then show that with respect to the past these models have a heuristic function for historical research and historiography; with respect to the present and future, however, they have the function of a theoretical guideline that might be of service for diagnosing and mastering concrete problems of societally organized life.

In addition to the analysis of the dialectical illusion connected with the reified idea of the totality of history, and following a critical restriction of universal-historical or historico-philosophical models of development, the task of a transcendental dialectic is the clarification of the idea of totality and its meaning for the constitution of knowledge. This is required, if for no other reason, because the unavoidability of the illusion described, i.e. its origin in human reason, could not otherwise be explained. The immediate extension to history of the idea of totality is naive but not without basis, and the resulting illusion can be detected although not eliminated once and for all. The transcendental dialectic must therefore demonstrate and justify the regulative character of the idea of totality in general and explicate, in particular, the theoretical significance of the regulative idea of a totality of history for historical knowledge. Elsewhere I have, in a similar manner, already attempted to demonstrate that the idea of an inclusive history is necessary as a regulative idea and that it is based upon an interest of reason in totality, which is posited with all finite knowledge.<sup>13</sup> The question of the significance of the con-

nection between historical totality and rational interest for the understanding of historical science and its always relevant and indispensable critical task has already been pursued a number of steps further by J. Rüsen.<sup>14</sup> He distinguishes two aggregate conditions of history, namely, the aggregate conditions of the factual reality of history (the historical entity) and the aggregate condition of history as the living present (totality).<sup>15</sup> At first sight this distinction is immediately convincing. But with respect to the physical metaphor and its implicit presupposition of a continuous transition from one aggregate condition to another, and in view of the unity of history, and the historicity of the human world of experience at least intimated thereby, the theoretical substance of this distinction still remains problematic. However, what should certainly be kept in mind in any case is that totality in its strict sense as an idea is not realizable at all, hence neither in the past, nor the present, nor the future. Therefore its realization cannot be thought of as an historical moment or essential feature of an historical epoch, not even of the final epoch of history. Considered in the light of critical criteria, the attempts by Schelling and Hegel at a philosophical-historical transformation of the transcendental philosophy have failed. The unity of reason and the interest in reason, which finds expression in the interest in totality, is, on the contrary, just as little a historical condition as the "I think" of Kant or the absolute Self of Fichte, in which self-knowledge and freedom are identical. All these concepts describe *a priori* conditions of knowledge, or normative principles of acting, as the case might be; they do not describe characteristics of ontic or historical conditions. Principles of history, however, are never historical themselves.

The transcendental dialectic leads therefore to a theoretical restriction of historical knowledge without giving up its underlying idea of totality and its fundamental practical meaning. Thus it remains as true as ever to say that history, in a particular way, shows man what he is; of course this is a way other than philosophers within the classical tradition of the philosophy of history, and even, let us say, Dilthey, thought they had understood.

##### 5. Preliminary considerations for a transcendental doctrine of me-

<sup>13</sup> Compare Baumgartner, *Kontinuität und Geschichte*, pp. 322ff; Baumgartner, "Kontinuität als Paradigma historischer Konstruktion," in, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 79 (1972): 254-68, esp. 265-66.

<sup>14</sup> Jörn Rüsen, "Werturteilsstreit und Erkenntnisfortschritt: Skizzen zur Typologie des Objektivitätsproblems in der Geschichtswissenschaft," in, *Historische Objektivität*, pp. 68-101; for approaches in this direction see Rüsen, "Rationalität und Geschichtlichkeit: Zur Logik historischer Erkenntnis II," *Philosophische Rundschau* 21 (1974): 24-55; and Rüsen, "Zum Verhältnis von Theorie und Didaktik der Geschichte," in, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (1975), pp. 427-41.

<sup>15</sup> Rüsen, "Werturteilsstreit und Erkenntnisfortschritt," pp. 94-95.

*thod.* Kant's division of the transcendental doctrine of method into the four parts of a discipline, a canon, an architectonic, and a history of pure reason,<sup>16</sup> is designed for pure rational knowledge, and therefore applies, strictly speaking, to it alone. Thus this division can be applied at best in a modified sense to the foundation of an empirical science, as represented by history as a scientific endeavor. This is already shown by the fact that a history of historical reason cannot belong to its doctrine of method, since that would mean a self-application of the principles of historical knowledge. Hence such a history could only be carried out as a separate empirical discipline of an interpretive history of ideas. Furthermore, the concept of system upon which Kant's idea of an architectonic of pure rational knowledge is based cannot be fulfilled with respect to history as science. Historical science is not a (linearly perfectible) system of elements of knowledge connected with and built upon one another, progressively approximating their object in a gradually exhaustive treatment. Such an assumption could only make a claim to validity where an *a priori* framework for the knowledge of the details can be asserted and substantiated *materially*. But according to the more recent understanding of empirical science, this is no longer the case even for our knowledge of nature in the so-called exact sciences. The idea of a gradual and progressive exhaustion is capable of execution solely *within* definite paradigms or anticipated historical perspectives based on value judgments. That means that the idea is capable of execution only to a limited extent. It is not valid for science as such. Therefore the only thing in historical science that could be thought of as analogous to a system is the fact that its entire interpretive bestowal of meaning receives its orientation from the idea of humanity in view of man's relations to nature and society. The "system" of history is its cardinal point and center of meaning: the acting and suffering human being, human reality with all its splendor and misery.

Thus a transcendental doctrine of method for historical knowledge in the sense of Kant's quadripartite division can be thought of solely as a discipline and canon of historical reason, and even here only in a modified sense. As a discipline it would have to summarize the restrictive conditions of historical knowledge elaborated in the transcendental logic, and formulate them as the (negative) conditions of a correct understanding of history as science. And as a canon of historical reason it would have the (positive) task of showing and explicating that, and to what extent, the narrative structure and narrating interest are based upon an ultimate practical and ethical interest of human reason — upon an interest, fundamental and constitutive for all knowledge, in giving a meaning to human life in the

<sup>16</sup> Compare Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 708; B 736; or *Critique of Pure Reason*, *ibid.*



mastering of its finite and transitory existence.

The execution of the two parts of a so-conceived doctrine of method cannot be undertaken within the context of a programmatic exposition. Instead, I would like to advance, and discuss in part, some theses which could serve as the preparation of a transcendental doctrine of method in the sense of a discipline of historical reason.

(1) On account of its transcendental character, the transcendental doctrine of method for historical knowledge is not an encyclopedia of the historical sciences. It rather has reference to the concept of history as science in general and not to the possibility of its manifold application.

(2) The transcendental doctrine of method contains no direct instructions for historical research and representation; hence it is neither an organon for historical research nor a kind of poetics for historiography. What it does contain are substantiated indications as to how historical research and historiography must be reflexively understood if they are viewed from the perspective of the material set forth in the transcendental logic. In this sense the transcendental doctrine of method, as the prerequisite of a methodological procedure, develops the conditions according to which anything can be spoken of, or asserted, as scientific knowledge — conditions which also indirectly concern the treatment of historical material, concepts, statements, and connections of statements. Hence the transcendental doctrine of method for historical knowledge does not give an answer to the question as to how such knowledge can be attained in a methodologically certain manner; it rather answers the question as to how its elements are to be understood, and what significance they accordingly possess for establishing it as scientific. What is to be understood as an item of scientific knowledge is an intersubjectively defensible statement, clear and distinct with respect to the concepts employed in it, which (1) does not contradict the criteria of objectivity for the historical entity; (2) has been tested with regard to its underlying presuppositions; and (3) can therefore, to the extent the presuppositions are shared, be regarded as provisionally justified. Thus the transcendental doctrine of method differs from a methodology of historical science as does the condition from the conditioned or as the principle from that which it establishes. From the analysis of the structure of the historical entity, the transcendental doctrine of method establishes the possibility of knowing it scientifically.

(3) With recourse to the transcendental logic of the historical entity, therefore, the transcendental doctrine of method analyses the various conceptualities and propositional schemas included by the narrative construct. It discusses their status with respect to the scientific knowledge established and establishable by them.

(4) Its first task in this respect is the investigation of the concepts

or terms designating an historical event or connection of events. Terms such as "Roman Empire," or "French Revolution," or "the assassination of Caesar," are, viewed from the transcendental logic, neither abstract concepts in the logical sense, nor archetypical modes of representation, nor simply factual descriptions of temporal events. Although they could also be conceived as such, that is, although these expressions could be placed in a corresponding (logical, archetypical, descriptive) supposition, in the context of historical consideration they are nothing other than expressions for connections of events. Their employment indicates that, in relation to the events initially approached in an undifferentiated manner in these representations, a coherent history can, or even should, be narrated. Hence expressions of this kind have their place in narrative supposition; they stand for narratable histories. For this reason they could best be designated transcendental-logically as 'narrems.'<sup>1</sup> In this connection attention should be called to the fact that a theory of narrative supposition, which would have to have recourse to the doctrine of supposition of the late Middle Ages, would be of particular importance for a transcendental analysis of historical knowledge. Danto's thoughts on the structure of narrative expressions and sentences could provide a starting point here.<sup>17</sup> Thus proceeding, it would first of all have to be investigated (1) which rules of application are valid for narremes; (2) which criteria they would have to meet; (3) how their application affects the context in which they stand; (4) how and to what extent even purely theoretical expressions could have their place in narrative supposition under certain conditions, particularly if they are related to individual characteristics or even to spatio-temporal indices. Asking and dealing with questions of this kind is mandatory if the theory of historical conceptuality is to be carried a decisive step beyond the traditional and unsatisfying understanding of historical expressions as singular and/or general concepts in the logical sense.

(5) A further, multilayered task of a transcendental doctrine of method is the investigation of the various propositional schemata or judgmental structures which are intentionally contained in narremes and which correspond to the constitution of narrative constructs, to the elements of its relation to the human world of experience, to spatio-temporal indexing, and to the bestowal and evaluation of meaning. In such propositional schemata at least the following elements can be singled out:

— Existential assertions concerning events whose possible modes of description are as abundant as are the resources of the respective colloquial language. (Example: "The French Revolution began on

<sup>17</sup> Danto, *Analytische Philosophie der Geschichte*, pp. 232ff, 253ff.

VII, 14, 1789 with the storming of the Bastille, the old Paris city prison."<sup>18)</sup>

— Assertions concerning causal and/or teleological connections of facts and actions which are based on existential assertions and which make an explanatory claim. (Example: "Rumors of an intended dissolution of the national assembly and the release of Necker (July 11) breed unrest in Paris."<sup>19)</sup>

— Statements concerning the contexts of meaning of those events whose horizon of meaning originates from a (theoretical, in Rickert's sense) relation of value present in the entity, and which cannot be made intelligible in terms of a causal and/or teleological connection of events alone. (Examples: "The French Revolution gave the decisive impulse for the spiritual, political, and social development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."<sup>20</sup> "In terms of its historical substance, the French Revolution, as all genuine revolutions, is the manifestation of an already accomplished upheaval in societal relationships."<sup>21)</sup>

— Assertions concerning essential historical events. (Example: "No other event of the revolution had such manifold and far-reaching consequences as the taking of the Bastille. It marked the end of the royal despotism in France, completed the transference of political power to the national lawgiving assembly, and set the stage for the downfall of feudalism..."<sup>22)</sup>

— Assertions concerning the trend of an historical connection of events. (Example: The principles of 1789 — freedom and equality, the idea of the sovereignty of the people — commence their march of triumph through the world. Everywhere the old order of estates loses its force, little by little, in the face of bourgeois equality. The monarchy is struck at the root. The victor of the overthrow is the bourgeoisie..."<sup>23)</sup>

— Evaluations of events or connections of events relative to different value scales, for example, evaluations in the sense of the positive or the negative, good or bad, progressive or fateful, or so on; and also evaluations in the sense of practical moral standpoints, for example, within the framework of final assumptions concerning what man

<sup>18</sup> *Der Farbige Ploetz: Illustrierte Weltgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Würzburg: Ploetz, 1973), p. 324.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>21</sup> Hans Freyer, *Weltgeschichte Europas*, 3rd. printing (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), p. 540.

<sup>22</sup> Albert Goodwin, *Die Französische Revolution*, trans. Jürgen Ackermann (Frankfurt a/M, 1964), p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> *Der farbige Ploetz*, p. 328-29.



should be, what he should not be, what is appropriate for him and what not, wherein he should succeed or what should rightly be withheld from him; and finally, even evaluations in the sense of universal suppositions of meaning, how things could have been, how they should have been, and also how they should never have been. Consider some examples:

The revolution brought about the downfall of the quasi-medieval condition in which the mainland peoples were living, and carried them over into the modern era. It helped democracy, that is, the right of self-determination and national self-consciousness, to victory. It freed the third estate — the creator of productive capitalism, industry, and technology. These are great historical achievements, even if one is sceptical about the consequences.<sup>24</sup>

The revolution did effect the decisive victory of the bourgeoisie, but only at the beginning; later on it effected the decisive victory of the rabble . . . . The French Revolution did *not* bring equality; it only led to another, much more reprehensible form of inequality: the capitalistic. The French Revolution did *not* bring freedom; it practiced the same hard-hearted, cruel, and selfish censorship of the spirit as the *ancien régime*, only this time in the name of freedom and with much more Draconian means . . . . Of its three slogans — *fraternité*, *liberté*, and *égalité* — the first was an empty theatrical phrase that cannot be put to the slightest use in political practice, and the other two are irreconcilable contraries.<sup>25</sup>

— Positions which evaluate the narrated history as a whole and, so to speak, externally — positions in which the historian himself takes a stand for or against certain of the connections of events described by him, portraying their advancement or prevention as the task of the times. Again consider some examples:

One can only gauge the revolution from the perspective of its exciting, pelting impatience. At last, after decades of empty talk, it was necessary to act; now something had to be done drastically and ruthlessly; it was necessary to destroy, there was no other choice; one had to be hard, because too long, much too long, one had been soft. The only thing that had to be destroyed was the old political and social allegiance. Whatever had been of value in the old France was preserved by the Revolution.<sup>26</sup>

What then does it mean to believe in the future of Europe? It means to believe that its strength is by no means spent, that the impetus of its beginning is by no means exhausted. It means to believe that its spirit, its inventive power, its industriousness, its sense of culture and tradition, as well as its colorfulness and unrest — that all of these will be indispensable in the larger dimensions of the future world history, not only for the administration of traditional centers of culture, but also for the building of a new world.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> O. Flake, *Die Französische Revolution* (Gütersloh, 1932), p. 186.

<sup>25</sup> E. Friedell, *Aufklärung und Revolution: Vom Siebenjährigen Krieg bis zum Wiener Kongreß* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1961), pp. 203-04.

<sup>26</sup> V. Valentin, *Weltgeschichte*, Vol. 2 (Munich, 1963), p. 718.

All these judgmental structures and propositional schemata correspond to the various factors of the narrative construct and to the function that this construct possesses for the narrator or listener, as the case may be. An elaborated transcendental doctrine of method would have to analyse them in detail and discuss their manifold structural presuppositions. It would also have to determine which of these statement-schemata are necessarily or constitutively connected with the narrem, and which can be considered as merely accidental. Along with the determination of their connection in narrem, particularly the relationship between understanding (*Verstehen*) and explaining (*Erklären*), as well as the old problem of the connection between facticity and evaluation, would have to be discussed and judged anew from the perspective of the transcendental-logical theory of the historical entity. The central question, however, is how the narrative construct can be accorded the character of scientific knowledge. What criteria must it satisfy and in which manner? If a narrative construct is supposed to be scientific knowledge and not simply saga, myth, or fable, then it must satisfy, in accordance with the statement structures it includes, the specific truth criteria in terms of which the truth claim raised with the construct can be justified. Following the present consideration, this is the methodological place for the rules of verification for documents, historical source criticism and the rules for the psychological interpretation of action and meaning. But at the same time, the difficult problems of evaluation and consensus building, concerning criteria for evaluation and meaning, are also raised. These problems refer the historian back to his own culture and consciousness of value, as well as to the factual level of research in his science and the level of discussion in the "scientific community." The positions taken by the historian on significant events, his evaluative viewpoint, and his historical judgment are not sufficiently plausible and secured — not even for himself — until they have proven themselves in the theoretical discourse of the "scientific community," or, as Aristotle put it, until they are shared by all, or by most, of the wise.

With the problem of evaluation and judgment claiming objective validity, the transcendental doctrine of method reaches the limit set for it by the transcendental analytic of historical knowledge. By virtue of the legitimate recourse to the transcendental fundamental anthropology, it possesses not only the formal criteria for the completeness of historical knowledge in accordance with the *a priori* structure of the human world of experience (nature and society); it is also in possession of a supreme principle of evaluation and meaning, on the basis of which it is capable of showing which measures of

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<sup>27</sup> Freyer, p. 612.

evaluating and judging are certainly false in the light of history because they contradict the fundamental anthropological norm. In view of the multiplicity of positive, concrete evaluations and judgments, however, nothing of decisive importance is thereby gained, for a hierarchical system of values is beyond our powers. We can only refer to the various kinds of possible and respectively appropriate criteria; we cannot determine them *a priori*. This state of affairs corresponds once again to the determination of the historical entity as a narrative construct with a practical intention. It includes the fact that historical knowledge with respect to all its criteria is related in principle to consensus. The truth of the various histories which we relate, and rightly so, cannot be decided, at least not *a priori*.<sup>28</sup> These histories are only provisionally true.

(6) It follows from Danto's thesis that the methodologically debatable relationship between narration and explanation should be settled in favor of the superiority of the concept of narration: History does not consist of a collection of singular events which the historian sorts out and explains with the help of the theories of empirical science; rather, history becomes actualized in narratives, which as such already possess explanatory power. This state of affairs does not preclude the possibility of historical accounts having recourse to uniformities of a theoretical nature for the description and understanding of certain causal dependencies.

(7) The transcendently interpreted concept of narration sketched here cannot be understood simply as one kind of portrayal (among others) of the historical object of research. The historical entity as narrative construct is, on the contrary, prior both to the distinction between historical research and historiography (a matter of great interest to Habermas<sup>29</sup>) and to the distinction made in Droysen's treatment between the investigative, narrative, didactic, and forensic types of representation.<sup>30</sup> Apart from the fact that Droysen's division of the narrative portrayal into pragmatic, monographic, biographical, and catastrophic is hardly convincing, his own specification of the narrative portrayal could have reminded him of the fundamental significance of narrating. According to his own words, the narrative account "portrays the researched matter as a course of affairs in the mimesis of its becoming [and] from the researched matter forms a picture of the genesis of the object of research."<sup>31</sup> Accord-

<sup>28</sup> Compare Baumgartner, "Narrative Struktur und Objektivität," pp. 59ff.

<sup>29</sup> See Jürgen Habermas, "Geschichte und Evolution," in J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 200-59 (first appeared in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, second issue, 1976).

<sup>30</sup> Compare Droysen, §§90ff.: pp. 360ff.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, §91: p. 361.



ing to Droysen himself, however, the object of research can only be apprehended and expressed as history if it is represented as something that is happening or has happened. To portray something in the mimesis of its development and to think of it as developing — these seem clearly to be identical with reference to the concept of the historical. The research object as the object of historical research is therefore already thought of as a form of development, prior to all narrative portrayal. Hence it follows that for Droysen himself the narration cannot have merely secondary importance with respect to the object of historical research, but must rather be viewed as constitutive. Narration is not simply a mode of historical portrayal; it is the foundational historical concept.

#### TRANSLATION NOTES

<sup>i</sup> The term “narrem” is a coinage of the author.

## MORALITY AND RELIGION IN KANT\*

Hans Wagner

Translated by Dennis Schmidt

The following expositions are devoted to two important parts of Kant's practical philosophy, his moral philosophy and his theory of religion, as well as to the systematic connection of these two parts. Both have been the object of various forms of scepticism from the outset: Kant's moral philosophy continually comes under the suspicion of being an ethical formalism, and his theory of religion is often considered as a position which is far too determined by prejudices of the Enlightenment and the Rationalism of the 18th century. These sceptical evaluations are not entirely groundless; indeed, there are sufficient remarks by Kant to which these evaluations could point. Here, however, I shall not deal with possible deficiencies in Kant's positions, but rather with some valuable insights of Kant's practical philosophy, which, despite the possibility of historical conditionedness and limitation, contain a sound core that needs once again to be exposed. I shall attempt to lay bare the core of these insights against the background of the above mentioned two-fold scepticism.

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With regard to Kant's ethics one must first of all admit that, by and large, contemporary moral philosophers are interested in it only

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\* Translated from Hans Wagner, "Moralität und Religion bei Kant," in, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, XXIX (1975), pp. 507-520.

This paper represents a modest attempt to defend Kant's so called 'formalism' in his ethics and his approach to the philosophical problem of religion. With regard to the issue of formalism it has two intentions: first, to make clear the distinction between what is morally pleasant and what is morally good; and second, to establish the criterion by which each and every person, whatever his situation may be, can know that part of the (material) content of the moral law which tells him concretely what to do or not to do. With regard to the issue of Kant's approach to the problem of religion, the paper begins by examining the purely ethical principles involved: it examines both the task of the perpetual 'sanctification' of man's will, and the necessity of the possibility of the 'whole and complete good' which includes happiness for the morally worthy person.

slightly, if at all. The reason for this is not difficult to find. Precisely those problems which interest them the least are the ones which interest Kant the most. This is not only the case for those moral philosophers for whom the ethical problem poses solely a linguistic problem, and who ask, "How do we speak of things which we regard as moral, and how do we express evaluations and imperatives that we understand as moral in our language?" It is also the case for the majority of those moral philosophers who still know that they are faced with substantive and material questions in ethics. Unlike Kant, however, these philosophers regard morality entirely as a problem of concrete, observable (be it utilitarian or non-utilitarian) behavior, whether of individuals or of groups, and, at best, what they want to include in their theories concerns the immediate and concrete motivation for each and every behavior, whether moral or immoral. As long as one conceives of morality solely in this sense, one hardly needs to be impressed with or bothered by Kant's ethics. Already we are confronted with the first moment of Kant's ethical "formalism."

Kant begins the first section of his *Foundations of a Metaphysics of Morals* with the famous sentence: "Nothing in the world, indeed nothing outside of it, can possibly be thought which could be held to be good without qualification except a *good will*."<sup>1</sup> In the final analysis that which alone is moral (morally positive) is a good will; *in the end*, nothing else can be considered morally positive, neither any particular type of behavior, deed, or act, nor even morally satisfying traits of character or temperament, nor even that which we usually deem to be moral virtue (including the cardinal virtues). What Kant is driving at is the following: Naturally there is a fundamental difference between that which the moral law demands and permits, and that which the moral law forbids. A behavior or action certainly cannot be morally good if it is forbidden by the moral law. *But*: a behavior or action is not yet morally good simply because it is in harmony with the moral law. It is, for example, certainly morally satisfying if a businessman serves his customers honestly and does not defraud them; however, this does not necessarily mean that his behavior is morally good. In fact it is not, if he behaves in such a manner because he knows that in the long run this behavior will be to his advantage.<sup>2</sup> Simply being in accord with the moral law does not mean that behavior is ethically good; rather, besides being in simple accord with the moral law ethically good behavior must, in the end, be a consequence *of respect* for that law. The basis for a

<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Akademie-Ausgabe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & co., 1903), IV. 392. 5-7; or Lewis White Beck, *Kant's Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1969), p. 11. Hereafter cited as *Grundlegung* and *Foundation*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Grundlegung*, p. 397. 21ff; or, *Foundation*, p. 16.



“genuine moral value”<sup>3</sup> lies solely in the quality of the *will*, and not in what the will wills (that is, in its possible objects) and what it has for intentions (with its object), but in *why* it wills, in the “principle of the will”: that is, behavior is ethically good only when the will wills out of respect for the moral law. To be sure, objects and intentions of the will belong to the content (material) of the will; the moral principle, however, belongs to the form of the will. This is the first moment of the so called ethical formalism of Kant, according to which ethically good behavior implies not only correspondence with the moral law, but the determination of the will through this moral law — the respect for this moral law which constitutes the ‘good will.’ I would like to contend that one who does not improperly restrict the moral problem to mere external behavior can only evaluate this first moment of the so-called formalism of Kantian ethics positively. Furthermore, this first formal moment gives the Kantian conception the advantage of being immune from any collision with the fundamental principles represented by Hedonism, Eudaemonism and Utilitarianism. Kant is far from denying the fact that there are morally pleasant (and unpleasant) acts, whether they are understood in an individualistic or collectivistic, egoistic or altruistic, hedonistic, eudaimonistic, or utilitarian way. What he does by virtue of this first formal moment is rather to underscore that the *ultimate* criterion of ethicality lies on a level which is one step *higher* than those upon which all those other conceptions of ethicality ultimately move.

But this formalism has a second moment, which is considerably more difficult to make clear. It is, I fear, virtually always misconstrued or misinterpreted. The reason for this seems to be that it is first necessary to think systematically about a problem which Kant did indeed confront, and which he also worked out in detail, but which he apparently did not formulate clearly enough so that, as a rule, historians of philosophy could recognize it. What problem is this? Indeed, it is precisely that problem which he solved with his famous and detailed theory of the categorical imperative. However, it is precisely this manner of solution which renews and intensifies the objection that Kant’s position represents an ethical formalism, although in truth it is a material problem of ethics which is solved by this “formal” solution.

What sort of problem is it then? When Kant answered the question in what alone the ethically good could finally consist, he appealed twice to the concept of the moral law: the ethical good consists in correspondence with the moral law and in respect for this moral law. Now this appeal obviously requires a *determination* of moral law: What is the moral law? What does it include (of ethical duties)?

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<sup>3</sup> *Grundlegung*, 398. 27; or *Foundation*, p. 17.

How do we know what it includes? If Kant — in a thoughtlessness of which it is quite hard to believe him capable — did not want to assume that, on the basis of our moral culture or some other empirical and thereby contingent ground, we all clearly know the moral law and know what it includes (of ethical duties), but if he wanted rather to do what is quite obviously necessary, then we must provide an answer to *this* question, “How can we *know* — seriously *know* — what the moral law is, what it requires, what it permits, what it forbids?” No attempt to lay claim to anything empirical, given, contingent, or historical helps here: there can be no appeal to sacred tradition, or to an alleged conformity of the ethical views of the human race, or to supposed means of anchoring this knowledge of the moral law in the given nature of human being. How then can the moral law be materially determined? How do we find a content for the moral law?

I can only regard it as a particularly gifted flash of insight that Kant solved this problem of content in the way in which he actually did. If one really wants to understand and properly appreciate this achievement, then one must probe deeper into the above mentioned issues.

Kant often emphasizes that man, simply because he is a living being, is to a high degree dependent, and conditioned — a part of physical nature at the mercy of manifold conditions. An immediate consequence of this is that man *must* necessarily will, strive for, and “desire” many things simply in order to be able to live and to remain alive; he must will to have, receive, procure and preserve many things for himself. In short, for man it is just as necessary as it is completely natural that his physical needs prescribe the first and fundamental goals of his actions, and that these goals represent his first and most fundamental motivations (drives, “incentives”). Quite often Kant expresses this in the following way: It is completely natural that man strives for “happiness” (for “happiness” is simply the name for the embodiment of that which man seeks for himself on the basis of his natural needs); or in this way: “Self-love” is completely natural for man; and finally in this way: For man, “seeking happiness” or “self-love” is an “unavoidable determining ground”<sup>4</sup> of his efforts and will.

A second step follows from this insight. Man acts first, and naturally in every case, in order to achieve and to effect through his action that which he naturally wants and seeks. The goal of his actions is identical with the object of his striving and willing; thus, his action is *object-determined* (determined through the sought-after object that

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<sup>4</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Akademie-Ausgabe, V. 25. 12-20; or, Lewis White Beck, *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956), p. 24. Hereafter cited as KdpV and CPrR.

is to be realized in action). But in addition to this object there is something else at work in every action which is just as important: the incentive, the motive of action. To be sure, for Kant it is — and I think rightly so — a fundamental fact that man is a rational being just as much as he is a living sensing being. Now, the elementary achievement of reason consists in every case in bringing particulars, which occur in consciousness (in thinking or in striving and willing), into a connection with others, and thereby bringing into play rules, regularities, and the like. In this way *universals* are brought into play. Thus, as a consequence of the fact that man is also a rational being, there can be no particular case of his willing and striving which can be determined merely from an equally particular motive of action which lacks universality. Rather, the impulse of an action necessarily has a moment of universality in it, that is something of a *rule* of action.

What Kant intends by this is well known to all of us. “I will not drink this beer warm as it is, because I (generally) do not like warm beer”; “I answer this rude letter from Maier with harshness, because I do not (generally) put up with such rudeness”; “I will be well-behaved and obliging towards this rude policeman, because I (generally) do not want to chance any trouble with the police.” This means that in addition to being determined by the object (striven for, posited as end), each of our actions is further determined by the respective subjective rule of action. Kant calls these respective subjective rules of action “*Maxims*.” One can call the determination through the object the material moment, and the determination through the respective maxims the formal moment of an action. As mentioned, the maxim is a rule of action; as a rule it is always the work of my reason, and as a rule of action it is more precisely the work of my “practical,” that is my action-determining, reason.

Up to this point we have arrived at the following. As a living being I naturally have objects for my striving and willing which positively correspond to the demands and necessities of my life. As a rational being my action is in every case also necessarily determined through certain rules of action, through maxims. Because I am and remain a living being, it is to be expected that this fundamental fact will also have a consequence for my maxims. It is, so to speak, natural that my maxims articulate themselves according to my life demands, for according to what else should they articulate themselves?

In anticipation of another step, something which in itself is quite trivial should perhaps be emphasized: There are of course an incalculable abundance of maxims of the most varied types, varying in every individual, for every domain of human action, for every context of life, variable in part according to a multitude of real factors of an individual, collective, and historical sort.



Kant's next idea is quite simple. Obviously not all maxims have moral validity; rather there are morally valid (ethically positive) and morally invalid (ethically negative) maxims. The question now is, what is the reliable criterion for differentiating the one from the other? We enter now a region which is familiar to every Kant scholar, the doctrine of the categorical imperative. But we proceed from the just mentioned question of criteria!

Kant's answer to this question is at first quite simple. Any maxim whatsoever is morally valid if and only if it can reasonably be thought as a "practical law," as a universally valid norm; on the other hand, that which cannot be thought as such, is unquestionably a morally condemnable, an immoral, maxim. Maxims have therefore different moral validity, and everyone can and therefore should check each and every maxim according to which he is about to act as to its moral validity or invalidity. Just as in the concept of a *natural* law for each and every case which is pertinent the law is valid without exception, so too the concept of a *moral* law requires that it be "valid for the will of every reasonable being"<sup>5</sup> without exception. The next question is, of course, how this can be decided for each individual maxim: How is it to be recognized whether or not a maxim possesses such validity for the will of every reasonable being? As is well known, Kant offers several equally decisive if interrelated criteria. I must, after all reasonable consideration, be able to think that *everyone* is permitted to act according to this maxim; in particular, that I would have no objection if someone wanted to act according to this maxim along with me or with reference to me. Furthermore, just as natural laws necessarily form a context with one another, and therefore harmonize with one another so that none of them can stand in contradiction with any other, so too must every maxim, if it is to be valid, form a context of practical laws with every other valid maxim, so that the invalidity of any maxim will be established as soon as it cannot be integrated into the context of the valid maxims because this context and this maxim contradict one another. Finally, Kant still offers this other criterion which does not concern the merely formal structural relations as do the two previous criteria, but concerns a clearly material moment. This is the so-called *humanitas* formula, according to which a maxim has to fulfill the requirement that no person is ever taken merely as a means, but that each and every person (myself and all others) is at all times respected also as an end in himself.<sup>6</sup>

I think it now becomes clear what constitutes Kant's brilliant in-

<sup>5</sup> KdpV, 19. 11-12; or CPrR, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Compare *Grundlegung*, 429. 10-12; or, *Foundation*, p. 54.

sight regarding the question of the true and complete content of the ethical law (refer to two pages previous), an insight which leads to an answer that, in the final analysis, is indeed sufficient. There can be no shortage of content for the ethical law at all, for there are always an abundance of maxims (in the heart of the acting and willing man), and all those maxims which fulfill the conditions requisite for a suitable practical-moral law form with one another the content of the ethical law. Therefore, the so-called formalism of Kantian ethics really consists in this: Kant formulates the universally valid criterion (or principle) according to which those maxims become selectable from the open infinity of possible maxims which are materially identical with what (as moral laws) constitutes the very content of the ethical law. And other than in this manner we can never *know* what are and what are not moral laws, what the ethical law requires, what it permits, and what it forbids. In brief, what is called formalism is, in truth, the principle and criterion for the identification (*Auffindung*) of the content of the ethical law.

It seems to me that not only the idea which leads to such a solution of the problem of content is brilliant, but no less admirable is an essential implication of this solution. Following Kant's solution, we must draw upon the open infinity of possible maxims which men might have had at any time, any place, and under any circumstances or have either now or in some future; also, the criterion of selection for maxims which are suitable for practical laws has its applicability at all times, everywhere, and under all circumstances. Thereby, Kant's solution has, from the start, taken into account all the facts of change, the variability and variety of moral life, upon which moral relativism and moral historicism justly or (in part) unjustly rely. Kant's ethics is thereby principally an *open* moral system with regard to content: There is no determinate moral law imprinted upon all time, and for all circumstances. Yet, for every time and for every sort of circumstance Kant's ethics secures what is ethically commanded, permitted, and forbidden. In order to avoid any misunderstanding one should immediately add that with this Kantian solution the content of the ethical law does not in any way become arbitrarily variable, because those *maxims* which prove themselves to be suitable as practical laws are in no way arbitrarily variable; there are enough constant factors (along with the undeniable factors of relativity and variability) which are also in play, such as those found in the fundamental structure of all human 'nature' as well as in all modes of human co-existence (in small circles, in large groups).

To this point the discussion has twice considered the so-called formalism of Kantian ethics. In each instance the charge of formalism depends upon a moment of the Kantian ethics which does, in fact, have a formal character. As we have seen, the second of these

formal moments paradoxically has an eminently material function, namely to make the content of the ethical law determinable. On the other hand, the first formal moment has its role in the determination of that which alone constitutes “the genuine moral value” of an action: that it not only be in accord with the ethical law, but also that it is performed out of respect for this law. Thereby, the *core* of all morality is transferred from the realm of mere external behavior (doing and not-doing) into the internal realm of the will. It is in this sense that the “good will” is morally decisive. There is, however, another important doctrine in Kant’s ethical theory that rests immediately upon this last mentioned of the two formal moments.

We have seen that and why it is only natural for man (see approximately four pages earlier) that the demands of his physical life motivate him, and that his maxims are oriented toward these demands. We have also seen (compare approximately three pages earlier) that, for the sake of ethicality, his maxims must be examined and selected according to criteria of validity. A simple inference introduces a third point. Ethicality requires that the “natural” demands of physical life determine action only so long as they do not contradict morally valid possible maxims (that is the moral laws), which in turn implies that our own free will may not will everything to which our natural “impulses” (drives) lead us, and that in the event of conflict with the moral laws our free will is obligated to will in *opposition* to the “natural” drives. This is no light obligation, for it is an obligation *against* our fundamental nature as living (“sensing”) beings.

From this two further points result. First, Kant’s theorem of *pure* practical reason becomes understandable. We have seen (compare approximately three pages earlier) that because we are *rational* beings we necessarily also have (universal) *maxims* (not merely individual drives), determining our actions; and that, because we are *sensing* beings, we have maxims directed first to these simple demands of life as well as restricted to them. However, we have also seen (approximately two pages earlier) that ethicality demands examination and selection of these “natural” maxims and that there is a universal principle and criterion for this. It is *pure* (*a priori*) practical reason which furnishes this principle and criterion and which performs that examination and selection of maxims. Thus, just as ‘mere’ practical (empirically practical) reason is the basis for man, this living being (as opposed to all other living beings) having maxims and acting according to maxims, so pure practical reason is the basis for the web of those maxims being produced (out of the aggregate of all possible maxims) which possess moral validity and which therefore form the (open and yet determined through a principle) system of contents of



the ethical law. The second point which results is the following: If ethicality demands that our free will does not will arbitrarily, but that in the case of conflict between our natural drives and the moral laws it obliges us to will *against* our ever present and fundamental nature as sensing beings, and if, as mentioned, this is no light obligation for our willing, then the most fundamental and central moral task for us becomes that of educating and forming *our willing itself* according to ethicality. Not infrequently Kant calls this task 'sanctification' (*Heiligung*), the progressive 'sanctification' of our will. The degree of ethicality of each and every one of us is determined according to nothing other than the respective degree of 'sanctification' of one's will.

I fear that this is the point at which Kant's ethics is furthest from contemporary moral theories. There are two things to be said about this. First, there is nothing of real ethicality (*Ethos*) present where everything is a matter of external behavior and its social qualities, instead of the innerness of the quality of will. When morality is merely a matter of the integration of behavior, of socialization, of the fulfillment of social role expectations, or of resistance and rebellion against social compulsions and "Tabus," of role refusal and the like, then it is not a matter of ethicality. Second, there is no reason to fear that the concentration of the primary ethical efforts upon the innerness of the quality of the will would have detrimental effects upon the formation of external behavior (doing and not-doing). As Kant understands the innerness of the quality of the will and the task of the 'sanctification' of the will, the will is constantly related immediately and necessarily to concrete actions: It is a matter of maxims of *action*, of maxims of *behavior*. Furthermore, this will, as Kant understands it, stands sovereign over any ideological conflict between a conservative will, which wants to conserve behavior models, and a will which wants to change behavior models; rather, from this will there results a way of action and behavior that, whenever the universal moral principle demands the conservation of behavior models conserve them, and whenever that principle demands modification and improvement justifies such modification and improvement.

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When one follows Kant in his transition from moral philosophy in the narrow sense to his philosophy of *religion* with its orientation toward moral theory, it becomes immediately clear that the task of progressive 'sanctification' of the will, that is the formation of the will in conformity with the ethical law, does in fact present the most central and essential moral demand in Kant's ethics. In fact, Kant's

philosophy of religion has its highest principles within the network of his ethics, and so these principles are also dealt with in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (even if not there alone, but always within contexts of moral theory). In the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason"<sup>7</sup> these fundaments of the philosophy of religion are examined.

The ethical task par excellence for man is the progressive 'sanctification' of his will; the end of this task would be the 'sanctity' of his will. There is indeed progress with respect to this task, without, however, a conclusion: the final goal lies in infinity. Thus, it is immediately established that in the course of his life man cannot reach this goal. Kant then carries his argument further. First, it would contradict the dignity of the ethical law if, as a consequence of it, one had as the highest task of one's life this progressive 'sanctification' of one's will and if progress in this task was absurdly broken off by one's death. This would mean that the fulfillment of the ethical law is no longer a matter of importance, and consequently the dignity of the ethical law would show itself as, in truth, nothing. Second, it would be diametrically opposed to the dignity of the moral man if this progress towards the sanctity of the will should simply cease with the death of the person, for then, after a lifelong ethical progress, that which constitutes the entire dignity of man would suddenly and absurdly prove itself to be nothing at all. In order for this consequence — an absurd denigration of the dignity of both the moral law and moral man — to be excluded, moral reason demands that the progress in 'sanctification' of the will be continued beyond death and, according to the infinite character of the ideal of the 'sanctity' of the will, into infinity. Thus reason also requires, simply by way of inclusion, the infinite endurance of the existence of the moral man, that is, of man as ethical subject. It is, therefore, moral reason that requires a metaphysical-transcendent supposition, and it does so in view of the necessity to exclude this double moral absurdity for moral reasons. As is well known, Kant calls this supposition the postulate of the immortality of the soul.<sup>8</sup> It is of course understandable when Kant remarks that this postulate is also of great use for religion.<sup>9</sup>

The further postulate of the existence of God<sup>10</sup> is of no less "use" for religion. Here Kant's argumentation is somewhat more lengthy. He proceeds from a concept of the highest and at the same time complete ("whole and completed"<sup>11</sup>) good. Progressive 'sanctifica-

<sup>7</sup> KdpV, 107ff; or CPrR, pp. 111ff.

<sup>8</sup> KdpV, 122-24; or CPrR, pp. 126-28.

<sup>9</sup> KdpV, 122. 26-30; or CPrR, pp. 127.

<sup>10</sup> KdpV, 124-32; or CPrR, pp. 128-36.

<sup>11</sup> KdpV, 110. 22; CPrR, pp. 114.

tion' of the will (virtuous mentality, *tugendhafte Gesinnung*) is the highest good for man; however, it cannot be considered the complete good. The progressive 'sanctification' of the will establishes the worthiness of the moral man to be *happy*: the former belongs to the latter as does the (unconditioned) condition to its necessary consequence. The *unification*, therefore, of morality and morally conditioned happiness is that *complete* good which is to be necessarily posited. One point is immediately certain: Only the component of morality lies in our power (in the competence of the readiness of our will for 'sanctification'); the component of happiness, however, does not. In which power does this second component lie? Not even conceivably in the whole of nature, in which man exists, for in no respect does it take heed of such an agreement, required through the idea of the complete good, between the ethicality of man (as a rational being) and his happiness (of which he, this being dependent upon nature, on account of his morality is nevertheless worthy).

Thus, if this morally necessary idea of the complete good for man is not absurdly to prove itself to be nothing, then a power outside of nature, a metaphysical-transcendent entity, is to be assumed which can ground and guarantee the requisite agreement between morally conditioned worthiness of happiness and factual happiness.

This entity, unlike nature, must be a cause of such a type that in its very causality it takes account of the interests of ethicality and of the morally conditioned human worthiness of happiness. It must be a being sublimely above nature which is characterized by understanding and will. The existence of God is, therefore, to be assumed out of moral practical grounds if this idea of the complete good, which is necessary to moral theory, is not absurdly to show itself as nothing. Once again pure practical reason requires a metaphysical-transcendent assumption, naturally out of moral grounds, simply in order to exclude an otherwise unavoidable moral absurdity.

It is pure practical reason that founds these two postulates which are fundamental for the religion of man. Otherwise formulated, on *moral*-theoretical grounds philosophical reflection leads to two metaphysical-transcendent principles which appear to belong to the theory of religion and not to ethics, but which in truth belong to both, insofar as these principles are produced in ethics and present fundamentals for the theory of religion. I believe that this is a matter worthy of consideration, especially when one recalls how today this relation has virtually been forgotten. Today we find ethics completely without relation to the problems of the theory of religion and neutral with respect to belief and dis-belief, and, for the most part, we find both religion and atheism avoiding any self-critical reference to the problematic of ethics and the field of moral praxis.



I believe that it is worthwhile to reflect upon how Kant judges the epistemological status of these two postulates which, on the one hand, have their ground in morality and which, on the other hand, present principles for religion as their consequence. At first Kant emphasizes that it is our moral duty to “further” the complete good by the component which stands within our power (the component of the ‘sanctification’ of our will and realization of our worthiness of happiness). With this moral duty, however, the necessity for us to presuppose the possibility of the complete good with respect to *both* of its components is immediately established. This is the moral necessity for us to assume the existence of God.<sup>12</sup> Such moral necessity does not however imply something like a duty to assume the existence of God; for, Kant explicitly says, there can be no obligation to assume the existence of anything whatsoever.<sup>13</sup> From a theoretical point of view the assumption of the existence of God can never be more than a hypothesis; it is more than a mere hypothesis only in a moral-practical respect, because only on this assumption can we render comprehensible (that is, grasp in its possibility) that which pure practical reason prescribes for us as the highest object of our will: our particular contribution to the complete good. Thus, that which must remain merely a hypothesis for theoretical reason, is, from the moral-practical point of view, “faith,” the pure faith of reason, because its source is nothing other than pure reason.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, according to Kant, religion does not consist in or rest upon any type of faith *whatsoever*; rather, it rests upon the very special type of belief which is called “the pure faith of reason.” It is through this intermediary of the “pure faith of reason” that the fundamental fact of ethicality, that is, the moral law, finally leads, in the form of the postulates of moral practical reason, to religion.<sup>15</sup>

Kant always emphasized two points: In no case can the binding force of the ethical law be based upon the idea of God and upon religion (that would be an inversion of the order of grounding), and in no case can the idea of God, of religion, or the idea of the attainable happiness ever be the motive for an ethical action and behavior. Without in the least undermining the force of these two points, he then says<sup>16</sup> that religion which is founded upon the pure and practical faith of reason is able to establish something which otherwise is not possible, namely, a well defined type of *hope*. The ethical law

<sup>12</sup> Compare KdpV, 125. 25-30; or, CPrR, p. 130.

<sup>13</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> KdpV, 126. 6-13; or, CPrR, p. 130.

<sup>15</sup> Compare KdpV, 129. 16-18; or, CPrR, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> KdpV, 130. 22-28; or, CPrR, p. 135.

commands; it unconditionally commands us to 'sanctify' our will and to contribute to the possibility of the complete good that part which stands in our power. As mentioned, it commands this unconditionally and not, therefore, conditional upon whether or not something like "happiness" will be added to the 'sanctification' of the will. Of course, nobody can know whether or not this will be the case. Indeed we know that in principle this can not, and will not, be the case in our life time (see page 15). Without religion grounded upon the pure faith of reason it could not even be hoped that such could ever become the case. Thanks to such religion, however, we can hope for two things: first, that the effort of man to make his will conform more and more reliably to the ethical law will not absurdly turn out to be purposeless in the hour of his death, a result that would leave man something like an incomplete ruin remaining after the building process had been broken off; and, second, that the natural striving of a rational being who is in every respect conditioned and dependent in his nature and who, on the basis of that nature necessarily seeks the happiness of which he makes himself worthy through his ethicality, will not absurdly remain completely without fulfillment; that is, that man will not immorally be made a fool of despite his own morality.

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The general course of the history of thought since Kant, as well as the special course of philosophical development, has without doubt led us very far from Kant's ethics and theory of religion. Since then much has happened, and no one could simply return to Kant's positions, even if one wanted to do so. For the metaphysical sceptic Kant's philosophy of religion is naturally still far too metaphysically dogmatic; while to others, it is far too restrictive, too much a document of the epoch of Rationalism and the Enlightenment where religion appears restricted to the realm "within the limits of mere reason." With regard to his ethics Kant's position hardly fares any better. Impressed by the fact that ethical evaluations and norms vary considerably, historicism and general relativism have ceased to regard the idea of a universally valid and absolute ethical law as anything more than a naive or rationalistic dogma. A similar situation holds also for the idea of a pure, that is a *priori*, practical reason (as for an *a priori* reason in general). Historicism and relativism have as good as withdrawn all credit here too. Likewise, the advances of the empirical sciences of man, which in Kant's time could not yet be imagined have, because they are results of objectifying method, led to the almost universally held conviction that man can not really be

other than he is within the horizon of these sciences which methodologically investigate him as an *object*. Man, as the *subject* which he is and must be, has universally vanished from the horizon of the empirical sciences, and even largely from the field of vision of the formation of philosophical theories. Therefore, it is thus no wonder that, considered from the contemporary perspective, Kant's ethics and theory of religion appear rather as dignified museum pieces than as positions which could still raise the claim to validity.

I, however, want to caution against simply dismissing these Kantian positions. We would obviously be able to do this only if we *knew* with complete certainty that we were right about all that which, in our eyes, speaks against Kant's positions; that is, if we could be certain about our historicism, our relativism, our subjectless objectivism, our metaphysical scepticism. But simply because we hold these positions does not make them true, and in no way are we protected from the possibility that Kant could be more right than ourselves. We need therefore to examine our own positions just as critically as we do Kant's. Possibly, we must again form a concept of *reason* and a concept of what we are and must be as *subjects*. What we have gone through in the history of thought and of philosophy since Kant will reliably prevent us from simply returning to Kant's positions. Nevertheless, it would help us a great deal if we fundamentally considered these positions of Kant and seriously confronted ourselves with the strength of his arguments. For as often as I may consider and review them, at least their core seems to me to be solid.



## HEBEL – FRIEND OF THE HOUSE\*

Martin Heidegger†

Translated by Bruce V. Foltz and Michael Heim

Who is Johann Peter Hebel? The question could be answered in a direct way; we could have the story of this man's life narrated to us. We still hear, perhaps, the name *Johann Peter Hebel* here and there in grade school. We learn a few of his poems from our textbook, and vaguely remember one or another of them. Sometimes too, we still hear the name Johann Peter Hebel when we come across one of his calendar-stories.

It is good to know the course of this poet's life, for this is what ordained that the latent poetic source within him should spring forth.

Johann Peter Hebel was born in 1760 in Basel where his parents, of German origin, were in the Swiss Civil Service. The father outlived the birth of the infant Hans Peter by only about a year. At the age of thirteen the boy lost his mother, who came from Hausen in the Wiese Valley. The Wiese Valley goes from the bend in the Rhine near Basel-Lörrach up into the Black Forest to the Feldberg, where the Wiese River springs forth. Hebel has sung of its shape and its course in his great poem "The Wiese."

Later, the young Hebel attended the gymnasium in Karlsruhe. He studied theology at Erlangen, was vicar in the Protestant Markgräflerland and soon after taught at Lörrach. At the age of thirty-one Hebel came again – this time as a teacher – to the gymnasium at Karlsruhe. There he was a professor and school principal, and finally attained high political and religious offices and honors, until he died at the age of sixty-six on September 22, 1826. More than half of Hebel's life was spent far from his homeland.

Indeed, even Karlsruhe was for him far away, for a nearness to the land of his birth and childhood unceasingly and irresistably penetrated the Wiese Valley and beckoned to him. The sap and energy of his native earth and the robustly cheerful attitude of the people there who held him in affection remained alive in Hebel's heart and spirit.

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\* Translated from *Hebel der Hausfreund* (Pfullingen, Günther Meske, 1957).

The sole dream of his life, to be able to live and work as a village pastor in Markgräflerland, remained, however, unfulfilled. Even so, the magic of his homeland held Hebel in its spell. Out of a longing for his homeland his *Allemanic Poems* took shape. They appeared in 1803. In the preface to them Hebel writes:

The dialect in which these poems are composed might justify their title. This dialect predominates in the corner of the Rhine between the Frick Valley and what was formerly Sundgau, and it is spoken further in many variants down to the Vogesen and the Alps and all across the Black Forest in a large part of the Schwabian region.

We could infer that, because it is written in a dialect, Hebel's poetry speaks only of a narrow world. It is, moreover, widely held that a dialect is a misused and misshapen version of the standard spoken and written language. But this is wrong. Dialect is the mysterious wellspring of every mature language. Whatever is contained in the spirit of a language flows out to us from the dialect.

What is contained in the spirit of a genuine language? It preserves in itself inconspicuous but basic connections with God, with the world, with humans and their works, with their actions and inactions. Contained in the spirit of language is that loftiness, that all-pervasiveness from which each thing has its provenance in such a way that it has a recognized value and bears fruit.

This loftiness and validity comes to life in language. But it also dies with it as soon as language must do without the inflow from its source, which is the dialect. Johann Peter Hebel was well aware of this. And so in a letter written shortly before the publication of the *Allemanic Poems* he wrote that these poems definitely remain within the character and limited viewpoint of a small indigenous group [by which he means the Allemanic people], but that they are at the same time "noble poems" (*Letters*, p. 114).

What is "noble poetry"? It is poetry that has nobility, that is, has a lofty origin from that which inherently endures and whose profusive force is never depleted. Johann Peter Hebel is accordingly not a mere poet of a dialect and a region. Hebel is a poet of worldwide import. And with this we now seem to have an answer to our question, who is Johann Peter Hebel? Yet we still do not have the answer. We would have it only if we also knew why Hebel is the great poet he is. And so we ask again: Who is Johann Peter Hebel?

We are now reaching for an answer to this question when we say: Johann Peter Hebel is the *friend of the house*.

The answer at first sounds odd, if not altogether unintelligible. House-friend — a simple word, yet one of deep and broad meaning. Thanks to a wonderful keenness of ear, Hebel found the name "house-friend" and preserved its stimulating polysemy. Hebel chose this name for the title of the Baden Province Calendar which he edit-

ed. But at the same time he recognized in the title "House-Friend" a word which characterized his own poetic calling.

Hebel was "enthused with the beautiful idea of making the Calendar of the Rhenish House-Friend into a welcome and beneficent publication," as he wrote in 1811 to the "grand ducal, most honorable Ministry" in Karlsruhe; he was pleased "to establish it, if possible, as the exemplary calendar throughout all of Germany and as victor of any possible competition." What Hebel says here about his beautiful idea for a calendar deserves our word-by-word consideration.

The calendar should become a publication (*Erscheinung*). It should constantly illuminate and shed light on the daily life of human beings. The calendar should not merely appear like any other printed matter which, once it has been seen, has already disappeared.

The calendar's appearance (*Erscheinung*) should be "welcome": one which is freely greeted, not one imposed on people by the authorities, as was common at the time.

The calendar's appearance should be "beneficent": proffered with the hope of increasing the reader's well-being and of lessening his woe.

In such fashion the calendar should speak in an "exemplary" way beyond the narrow borders of the province toward all of Germany, for Hebel measures his utterances (*Sagen*) and writing by the highest standards. For this reason alone can he also assess the scope of such an appearance.

Finally, Hebel does not refrain from admitting that everything essential that humans are able to create is a gift of victory in the noble contest — even a calendar. In our day the "newsmagazine" (*Illustrierte*), has superseded the old calendar and destroyed it. The former, the "newsmagazine," scatters, distorts, throws the essential and inessential onto the same uniform level of the superficial, the ephemeral, the enticing, and the already past, as well. The latter, the calendar, was once able to show the enduring in the inconspicuous and to sustain alert awareness through repeated readings and reflections.

In this way Hebel, apart from this ever having occurred to him, brought the "beautiful idea" of his calendar to shine beyond its own time, ever anew to enchant the thoughts and senses of men. How did this happen? It happened because Hebel became who he was; he became the house-friend. The simple but suggestive word "house-friend" names the basic character of Hebel's basic activity.

To be sure, if one perceives the business of poets to consist exclusively in the production of poems, then one can affirm that Hebel discontinued his poetic activity after publishing the *Alamantic Poems*. But the poems "for friends of rustic nature and customs" are only the beginning of his world-wide poetic achievements. It is only by virtue of the stories and reflections of the Hebel calendar that this



beginning develops and becomes most noble German language. Hebel, who lived in a lucid proximity to language, knew of these riches. According to his own poetic feeling, then, he selected the loveliest pieces from those he had put into the Calendar of the Rhenish House-Friend. He thus refined the treasure into what was most precious, built a little chest for it, and in 1811 bestowed it on the entire German-speaking world as the "*Little Treasury*."

The pondering and creating by which the *Little Treasury* became the literary work that still claims our astonishment came out of that poetic attitude by which we recognize Hebel as the house-friend. But in the *Little Treasury* the *Allemanic Poems* are taken up and preserved in a new way (*aufgehoben*), in the threefold sense of "*aufgehoben*" as conceived by the poet's great contemporary from the Swabian region, the thinker, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

*Aufheben* means, in the first place: to lift from the floor what lies before one. Yet this sort of *aufheben* remains external as long as it does not define an *aufheben* that means something like: to store up or preserve (*aufbewahren*). Still, this *aufheben* gets strength and lastingness only when it comes from an *aufheben* that suggests: to elevate, to refine, to ennoble, and thus to transform. In such a manner Hebel has "taken up" the *Allemanic Poems* into the *Little Treasury*. The magic of the poems glows out of the *Little Treasury* apart from their actually having been included.

What we commonly see of the world, of human and divine things, gets transformed through poetic sayings (*das dichterische Sagen*) into what is precious and into the excess of what is mysterious. The ennobling that transforms happens by way of an intensified language. But it is an intensification which goes toward simplicity. To intensify language toward simplicity means: to transform everything into the soft glow of the peacefully sounding word. This ennobling speech (*Sagen*) characterizes the poetic activity of Johann Peter Hebel.

Only after we have reflected on this sufficiently do we begin to understand adequately, and enduringly, what respected men such as Emil Strauss, Wilhelm Altwegg, and Wilhelm Zentner have long recognized, namely, that Hebel's letters belong to the unity of his whole poetic work along with the *Allemanic Poems* and the *Little Treasury*.

Only a poet who realized with increasing clarity that his nature was that of the house-friend, and who took up that nature ever more decisively, could have written those letters.

Yet again we ask: who is this, the house-friend? In what manner and to which house is Hebel the friend?

First we think of all the houses in which people of the country and city dwell. All too easily, and often out of a need, we conceive of houses today as the spaces in which everyday human life runs its

course. The house has almost become a mere container for dwelling. Yet the house first becomes a house only through dwelling. Building, whereby the house is constructed, is that which it truly is only when, from the beginning, it remains in tune with that which allows us to dwell, and which in each case awakens and assures ever more original possibilities for dwelling.

If the verb “to dwell” is thought broadly and essentially enough, it designates to us the manner in which man, upon the earth and beneath the sky, completes the passage from birth to death. This passage is multiform and rich in transformations. It nevertheless remains throughout the chief trait of dwelling, of the human sojourn between earth and sky, between birth and death, between joy and pain, between work and word.

If we call this manifold “Between” the *world*, then the world is the house that mortals inhabit. The individual houses, villages, and cities are, for their part, buildings which gather that manifold between within and around themselves. It is buildings which first bring the earth as inhabited landscape into the nearness of man, and at the same time place the nearness of neighborly dwelling beneath the expanse of the sky. Only in the measure that man, as the mortal one, inhabits the house of the world, does he stand in the calling (*Bestimmung*) to build a house for the celestial ones, and a dwelling-place for himself.

The house-friend is friend to the house which the world is. He is attached to the whole wide dwelling of humankind. Yet his attachment is based on a belongingness to the world and its structure, a belongingness that is primordial but commensurate with each age. So we find “Reflections on the World-Edifice” in the *Little Treasury* of the house-friend.

However, the house-friend had not arbitrarily and haphazardly scattered the reflections among the stories. He had carefully considered the treasure of the treasury and ordered it well.

Moreover, the *Little Treasury* even *begins* with the “General Reflections on the World-Edifice.” The friend of this house first brings before us “the earth and sun.” After that, reflections on the moon follow. Then, in the sequence between the stories about the harmless and the adventuresome, about the upright and cunning actions and enterprises of humans, there sparkle the stars: first, divided into two passages, the planets and comets, and then — intentionally placed at the conclusion — the fixed stars.

Now one could say, and with a certain correctness, that Hebel’s “Reflections on the World-Edifice” were only the result of the respect accorded the Enlightenment by his own time. Discoveries in the progressing natural sciences could no longer be ignored in Hebel’s time. There was a desire to pass these discoveries on to men as a bet-

ter knowledge of nature. This remark about the Enlightenment is indeed correct, but it misses completely the intention behind the "Reflections on the World-Edifice" made by Johann Peter Hebel, the house-friend. We can perceive his underlying intention only after we know *who* the *real* friend of the house is.

What necessarily surprises us is that it is not Hebel. But then who is it? Hebel himself provides us with the answer, provides it in fact in a remarkable passage of his "Reflections on the World-Edifice." When we attend to what is unique in the passage, we can infer from it a clue which is to be decisive in our attempt to conceive the essence (*das Wesen denken*) of the house-friend from within the framework of the house of the world. The passage in question occurs in the conclusion of the reflection on the moon. It is as follows:

Eighth and final point: What function does the moon in heaven really perform? Answer: Whatever function it is that the earth performs. So much at least is certain: the moon illuminates our nights with soft light reflected from its sun, and the moon watches how boys kiss girls. It is the genuine house-friend and first calendar-maker of our earth and the highest ranking official night watchman when other watchmen are asleep. (*Reflections on the World-Edifice. The Moon. I, 326ff.*)

The real house-friend of the earth is the moon. Who would venture to say, with words few and inevitably too crude, what in this image are the characteristics unique to the house-friend?

Just as the moon in its shining brings a soft light, so Hebel, the earthly house-friend, brings a light through his sayings, and a light that is soft as well. The moon brings light into our nights. But it has not lit the light it brings. The light is only the reflection of the light the moon previously received from the sun whose brilliance shines onto the earth too.

The reflection of the sun is passed on by the moon to the earth in a softened glow; this glow is the poetic image of that saying which is addressed to the house-friend so that he, thus illuminated, passes on what is addressed to *him* to those who dwell on earth with him.

In everything the house-friend says he guards what is essential, to which humans as dwellers are entrusted, yet of which they are all too easily oblivious in their slumbers.

The house-friend, like the highest-ranking official night watchman, the moon, is one who stays awake the whole night through. He watches over the right kind of rest for the dwellers; he watches out for what threatens and disturbs.

As the first calendar-maker, the moon marks the hourly passage of time. So too does poetic saying lead the way for mortals in their passage from birth to death.

The house-friend watches how boys kiss girls. His observing is one of wonderment, not a curious gaping. The house-friend sees to it



that lovers are provided with soft radiance, a moon-like splendor which is neither merely earthly nor only heavenly, but both, yet both as primordially inseparable.

Hebel would have us read the nature of the house-friend from the spectacle of the moon. The phases, stance, and motions of the house-friend are a single uniquely restrained and at once wakeful shining that puts all things in a soft, hardly noticeable light.

This corresponds to what Hebel says about himself as house-friend. Here and there he places "a little golden kernel" (II, 99) into his stories and reflections. "For the Rhenish house-friend walks steadily up and down the Rhine, looks into many a window, and no one sees him; he sits in many a tavern, and no one knows him; he goes an extra mile or two, as is needed, with many a good fellow, and he lets no one on to who he is."

Thus the house-friend thinks many things along with what he says to his devoted reader, and yet he lets the genuine (*das Eigentliche*) go unsaid. As is stated at the end of one of the calendar stories: "in this the house-friend is thinking something, but he doesn't say it." Certainly the house-friend also knows whither his saying speaks, namely, "out to the big marketplace of the world and of life." (II, 172) "At first you don't notice very much how always someone is going and another is coming, until you finally find yourself among completely different people than were there at first."

The house-friend also knows quite well how essentially the life of mortals is determined and carried by the word. In a letter from September 1808 Hebel writes: "A large part of our life is a wandering through words (*Irrgang*) which is pleasantly or unpleasantly confusing, and most of our wars are . . . word wars" (*Letters*, p. 372).

No wonder the house-friend suggests it is more difficult than we believe through his sayings properly to survive this war of words.

Hebel once wrote to Justinus Kerner (July 20, 1817, *Letters*, p. 565): "You know what it takes to place what has to be said to a certain audience into the truth and clarity of their lives . . ." and we might add, to remain "inconspicuous and unobtrusive" in doing so (August 10, 1817, *Letters*, p. 567). For this is the manner of the house-friend. Around the same time Hebel again elucidated the name when he wrote (to Justinus Kerner, October 24, 1817, *Letters*, p. 569) that with a name like this "you can surely speak heart-to-heart with the reader and unceremoniously pull his leg."

In the undemonstrative saying, which leaves what it has to say in the unsaid, the friendliness of the house-friend flows out toward his readers. In such saying, the house-friend finds and preserves advertency to the dwelling of mortals inasmuch as he enters into the house of the world and is nonetheless a guest of the world as if he were not really a guest.

“House-friend” — that is the distantly foreseeing and at once self-disguising name for that which is essential to what we usually call a *poet*.

The poet gathers the world into a saying whose word remains a softly restrained shining in which the world appears as if being caught sight of for the first time. The house-friend wishes neither to instruct nor to educate. He lets the reader have his way so that he may on his own attain that predeliction for the essential toward which the house-friend himself inclines in order that he may speak with us.

What sort of conversation does the friend of the house, of the house that is the world, have in mind? Concerning what does the house-friend wish first to speak? Answer: Concerning that with which he himself begins his sayings in the *Little Treasury*. These are the “General Reflections on the World-Edifice.” Hebel concludes this introduction with the sentence: “And so the house-friend will now preach a sermon, first, about the earth and about the sun, after that about the moon, after that about the stars.”

A sermon? Indeed. Yet we must pay close attention to who is preaching here. The house-friend, not the minister. But the poet who preaches is a poor poet — even if we understand the old word “preach” in a thoughtful manner. “To preach” (*Predigen*) is the Latin *praedicare*. It means: to recite something to someone (*etwas vorsegen*), and thus to bring news, and so to make known or renowned (*rühmen*) and thus to let what is to be said appear in its shining. This “preaching” is the essence of poetic saying.

Accordingly, Hebel’s “Reflections on the World-Edifice” are poetic. There is risk in asserting this, for Hebel’s own intention and statements seem to speak against it. Yet Hebel wished, through the “Reflections” mentioned, to introduce his calendar readers to a better knowledge of the world-edifice so as to free them from their neglectful ignorance.

The first page of the *Little Treasury* begins with the following sentences (I, 264):

Everything’s fine for the gentle reader when he’s sitting home among familiar mountains and trees with his family and friends, or when he’s having a beer in the local tavern, and he doesn’t give it a single further thought. But when the sun rises early in its quiet majesty, he knows not whence it comes; and evenings, when it goes down, he knows not whither it goes and where it hides its light throughout the night and on which secret pathway it again finds its way to the mountains of dawn. Or when the moon goes around pale and thin one time, and round and full another, again he knows not how this comes about, and when he looks up into a sky full of stars, and the one twinkles more beautifully and joyfully than the other, he believes they are all there for his sake. And yet he really doesn’t know quite what they want. Good friend, it is not commendable to see something all one’s days and never ask what it means.

The house-friend wants to incline his readers to ponder what manifests itself in the processes and conditions of nature permeating our inhabited world. He therefore also presents nature to his readers as it is represented by the "Physicists and astronomers" of modern natural science, and, foremost among these, by the "goodly Copernicus": namely, in numbers, diagrams, and laws. We deliberately say: the house-friend *also* shows nature in its scientific calculability. He does not, however, lose himself in this conception of nature. Indeed, the house-friend directs the eye toward nature in its calculability, but at the same time he brings it as thus represented back into the *simple naturalness* (*die Natürlichkeit*) of nature. This naturalness of nature is essentially, and hence historically as well, far more ancient than nature in the sense of an object of modern natural science. The naturalness of nature never grows directly out of nature itself; rather, it is caught sight of expressly in that to which the ancient Greek thinkers once gave the name "*physis*": the rising and receding of all that is present in its presencing and absencing. The natural in nature is that rising and setting of the sun, of the moon, of the stars, which directly addresses humans as they dwell, by commending to them the mysteriousness of the world. Although with scientific enlightenment about the world-edifice the sun comes to be thought in a Copernican manner, according to two of Hebel's poems it nonetheless remains — within natural nature — that "uncommon woman" from whom "all light and warmth comes," "whom everything begs for a blessing" and "nonetheless remains so generous and friendly."

Does Hebel transform the sun into a peasant woman here, or does the simplicity of such a woman and all mankind first come to light when the sun and the stars of natural nature shine upon us in their calm splendor?

Indeed, Goethe in his review of Hebel's *Allemanic Poems* writes: "The author transforms the objects of nature into peasants, and in the most naive and gracious manner, thoroughly countrifies the universe; so that the landscape, where one continually catches sight of the peasant anyway, seems to merge into one with him in our heightened and exhilarated imagination (*Phantasie*)."

Hebel countrifies the universe. This judgment sounds harsh, and yet is intended to be a friendly one. It even touches precisely upon a *question* which continually stirred the later thought and poetry of Goethe.

What is it, then, that we as well, and all the more so we of today, must appreciate as worthy of urgent questioning?

What is worthy of question is that which has meanwhile intensified into something immeasurable and opaque, sweeping our age away to we know not where.

What is worthy of question is that for which we today do not yet



even know the right name: that the technologically dominable nature of science, and the natural nature of the accustomed, and likewise historically determined dwelling of man, are disengaged from one another as two alien realms, and with a constant acceleration are racing even further apart.

What is worthy of question is that the calculability of nature is offered as the sole key to the mystery of the world.

What is worthy of question is that calculable nature, as the supposedly true world, seizes upon every reflection and aspiration of man, changing and hardening human ideation into a merely calculative thinking.

What is worthy of question is that natural nature is degraded into the nullity of a mere product of our fancy (*eines Phantasiegebildes*), and no longer even addresses the poets.

What is worthy of question is that poetry itself is no longer able to be an exemplary form of truth.

All of this may also be said as follows: We are errant today in a world which is a house without a friend, that is, which lacks that house-friend who in equal manner and with equal force is inclined toward both the technologically constructed world-edifice *and* the world as the house for a more original dwelling. Missing is that friend of the house who is able to re-entrust the calculability and technology of nature to the open mystery of a newly experienced naturalness of nature.

This house-friend, to be sure, countrifies the universe. But this countrifying has the character of that building which thinks in the direction of a more original dwelling of man.

Needed for this are builders who know that through atomic energy man does not live, but rather perishes at best; that is, man must also lose himself (*sein Wesen*) even when atomic energy is used only for peaceful purposes, and when these purposes alone remain exemplary for his every goal and calling. In contrast to this, genuine builders consider such mere survival to be no real dwelling at all. For man "dwells," *if* he dwells, in the words of Hölderlin, "poetically . . . upon this earth."

Johann Peter Hebel is the poet in the form of the house-friend. To be sure, we of today can no longer return to the world experienced by Hebel a hundred and fifty years ago, neither to its intact rusticity, nor to its limited knowledge of nature.

We can, however, notice that, and how, what is poetic in the dwelling of man needs the poet who is friend in a lofty and wide-ranging sense: friend to the house of the world.

We can look ahead, to where Johann Peter Hebel beckons when he thinks of the poet as the house-friend who brings to language the house of the world for the dwelling of man.

“To bring to language” — we use this phrase commonly to express something being posed for discussion and to be dealt with. Yet if we consider the phrase “bring to language” thoughtfully, with regard to the bearing of its words, it acquires a deeper sense. Then “to bring to language” means: to raise what was formerly unspoken, what was never before said, initially to word, and through saying to let appear what has till now been concealed. If we thoughtfully consider the character of saying in this regard, it becomes apparent that language shelters within itself the treasure of everything essential.

To this day, few have quite fathomed what is concealed in Johann Peter Hebel’s *Little Treasury*. Hebel’s meditations and stories speak in the simplest, the clearest, at the same time in the most enchanting and thoughtful German language ever written. The language of Hebel’s *Little Treasury* remains the standard of learning for those preparing to speak or write that language in an exemplary way.

In what lies the mystery of Hebel’s language? Not in any pretentious will to have a style, nor in any intention to write in the most popular manner possible. The mystery of the language of the *Little Treasury* lies in the fact that Hebel was able to embody the language of the Allemanic dialect in the standard written language. In this manner, the poet allows the written language to resonate as pure echo of the riches of the dialect.

Do we still hear the language of the *Little Treasury*? Does our language, then, still concern us at all, so that we hearken to it? Or is our own language ebbing away from us? Indeed it is. What was once spoken in our language, its inexhaustible antiquity, sinks more and more into an oblivion. What is happening here?

Whenever and however man speaks, he speaks only so long as he always already gives ear to language. Likewise, even the mishearing of language is still a kind of hearing. Man speaks from within that language to which his essence is commended. We call this language “the mother tongue.”

With regard to the language that has grown historically — that it is the mother tongue — we may say: *It is language, not man, which genuinely speaks. Man speaks only to the extent that he in each case co-responds to language.*

In the present age, owing to the haste and commonplaceness of everyday talking and writing, another relation to language predominates ever more decisively. That is to say, just as we take everything with which we deal from day to day to be an instrument, we take language too to be an instrument, indeed *the* instrument for communication and information.

This notion of language is so familiar to us that we scarcely notice its uncanny power. But in the meantime, what is uncanny comes to light more distinctly. Today the notion of language as an instrument

of information is driven to extremes. We are no doubt acquainted with this process, yet we fail to consider what it means. We know that, in connection with the construction of electronic brains, not only calculating machines but also thinking and translating machines are now being built. Yet all calculating, in both the narrower and the broader sense, all thinking and translating, move in the element of language. By means of those machines just mentioned, the *language machine* has become an actuality.

The language machine, in the sense of the technical complex of calculating and translating machines, is different from the speaking machine. We are acquainted with the latter in the form of an apparatus which records and reproduces our speaking, and consequently does not yet intrude into the speaking of language itself.

On the contrary, the language machine regulates and adjusts from the beginning the mode of our possible usage of language through mechanical energies and functions. The language machine is — and above all, is still becoming — one manner in which modern technology controls the mode and the world of language as such.

Meanwhile, the impression is still maintained that man is the master of the language machine. But the truth of the matter might well be that the language machine takes language into its management, and thus masters the essence of man.

The relation of man to language is in the midst of a transformation the consequences of which we have not yet weighed. Nor can the course of this transformation be directly halted. Moreover, it proceeds in the most profound silence.

It must certainly be granted that in everyday living language appears as a means for communication, and it is as such a means that it is employed in the commonplace relationships of life. There are, however, relationships other than the commonplace. Goethe calls these other relationships the “deeper” ones, and says of language:

“In ordinary life, we make do with impoverished language because we only signify superficial relationships. As soon as the talk is of deeper relations, another language at once enters in — the poetic.”

Johann Peter Hebel named these deeper relations when he once wrote: “We are plants which — whether we care to admit it to ourselves or not — must ascend with our roots in the earth, in order to bloom in the ether and bear fruit.”

The earth — this word in Hebel’s sentence designates all that which as visible, audible, or palpable supports and surrounds us, kindles and calms us: the sensuous.

The ether (the sky) — this word in Hebel’s sentence designates all we perceive, but not with our sense-organs — the non-sensuous, sense (*Sinn*), spirit.

*But the pathway (Weg und Steg) between the depths of the per-*



*fectly sensuous and the heights of the intrepidly spiritual is language.*

To what extent? A word of language sounds and resounds in the voice, is clear and bright in the typeface. Voice and script are indeed sensuous, yet always within them a meaning (*Sinn*) is told and appears. As sensuous meaning, the word traverses the expanse of the leeway between earth and sky. Language holds open the realm in which man, upon the earth and beneath the sky, inhabits the house of the world.

The poet, Johann Peter Hebel, lucidly wanders (*wandert hellen Sinnes*) upon pathways we can experience as language. We can do so, if we seek the friendship of the one who, as a poet, is himself friend to the house of the world —

Johann Peter Hebel: friend of the house.

HAPPINESS IN UNHAPPINESS:  
ON THE THEORY OF INDIRECT HAPPINESS  
BETWEEN THEODICY AND PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY\*

Odo Marquard

Translated by Vincent A. McCarthy

The question of happiness is an abstract one, if separated from the question of unhappiness. For there is no such thing as unclouded happiness for man. It is not humanly possible that everything favorable be present at hand, while everything unfavorable be absent. Pure happiness is not a thing of this world. This much is understood even by one who has doubts as to whether there is another world — in some eternity or in some future time — where there could be such. In “this world” nonetheless — the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) of men — happiness is always found alongside of unhappiness, in spite of unhappiness or even by means of unhappiness — one’s own or that of others or that through which both are joined. Human happiness is, very fundamentally, always only happiness in unhappiness.

There is ground for concern that he who does not take this fundamental state of affairs into account loses the capacity for happiness —

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The author, a skeptic from the hermeneutical school of Joachim Ritter, argues for a connection between the philosophical questions concerning happiness and unhappiness. Theodicy in the eighteenth century sought to establish this connection. The collapse of its optimistic Leibnizean form necessitates, in the second half of the twentieth century, not only modern philosophy of history and the neutralizing of the ethical problem of happiness in Kant, but also the philosophical quest to balance out happiness with unhappiness and for — individual, ontological, reformist — compensations for disturbance in the balance. Included here is the notion that it is through unhappiness that happiness arises and that is through shortcomings that compensations are necessitated. This notion is operative in philosophical anthropology even today; its consolation value, however, remains problematical.

the capability of the soul for humanly possible happiness — because he chases after the impossible. So it could in the end be dangerous to sever the themes happiness and unhappiness. For this reason it seems fitting to me, at a conference which philosophically inquires about happiness, to draw attention to unhappiness in the very question concerning happiness. This end in view, it will be worthwhile to investigate several forms in which philosophy — if indeed it has ever done so energetically — has explicitly and strikingly bound together the themes happiness and unhappiness. And it is my very modest intention to do this in the form of a hermeneutical random sampling.

I suppose that there is one — and I emphasize *one* — representative and also modern philosophical form of the connection of the theme happiness with the theme unhappiness, and that is theodicy and its derivatives. This supposition is my working hypothesis here, a question-provoking assertion which will be only briefly sketched out in the following pages. For the present I have not arrived at genuinely unassailable conclusions apropos of the problem. This is due to idleness and time pressure and to the fact that, up to the present, I have only in passing touched upon the matter which Herr Bien has cleverly talked me into presenting — and this within the context of research that has an entirely different purpose, namely a history of the concept “compensation.” If, out of curiosity and pleasure in the risky taking up of the problem, I now engage in this manner of joining the question, I betake myself necessarily into an area about which, as everyone knows, I understand little — not just philosophy, but philosophy of the early eighteenth century, and English and French philosophy there as well. Such a lack of expertise is, to cite Kant’s *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*, loosely,<sup>1</sup> indeed in itself already sufficient reason to read a paper on precisely this area before the *Engerer Kreis* (inner circle) of the *Allgemeine Gesellschaft für Philosophie in Deutschland*. But there is of course also the certainty that if — unhappily! — not the speaker, then at least the audience — happiness in unhappiness — will represent potential or actual concentrated expert knowledge which leaves it in the position and indeed obliges it to call the speaker to orderliness in the discussion so that, whatever muddle he may have prepared beforehand, the matter itself may not come to grief. You will note that I regard the fact that I am surrounded here by experts — devil-may-care, I admit, but with forethought all the same — not as warning but as license: as an encouragement to sin bravely, i.e., to speculate in an appropriately philosophic-historiographical fashion. I do this here unhesitatingly in forty-five minutes and six divisions, as follows: 1) starting-run, 2) teleologizing, 3) neutralizing, 4) balancing, 5) actualizing and 6) delimiting.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Kant’s *Gesammelte Schriften* (Akademieausgabe), hereafter AA), II, 318.



1. In order to make the leap into the explication of my supposition, I must first take a short starting-run. For this I start — as is recommended for philosophers — at the beginning of philosophy and thus with the Greeks. And there, it seems to me, one finds that the question concerning unhappiness was not yet meaningfully present in the question concerning happiness, not, at least, in classic Attic philosophy. Counter-concepts to “eudaimonia” are, to begin with, not philosophically prominent concepts. And [if we were to name such] what would they be? “*Kakadaimonia*”? “*Atychia*”? “*Athliotes*”? Only first, where, with regard to happiness, the privative- and counter-concept to the “*tarache*” becomes ethically dominant in the post-classical period in “*ataraxia*” do these — the affective disturbers of the peace in the life of the soul and bringers of unhappiness — become a theme of philosophy as something which has to be overcome. To be sure, if one, moreover, leaves Neoplatonism aside, which — if one believes its admirers — had in any case always known everything (and especially everything to do with privations), then it seems to be the case that Christianity was the first to make unhappiness into an unavoidable theme in philosophy. Ever since then must philosophy — “in this valley which rings with lamentation” — ask about happiness always in the face of unhappiness.

The philosophical answers are always relativizations of unhappiness. This assessment may be unpleasant but appears inescapable. Happiness in unhappiness is relativized unhappiness. The happy aspect therein is that unhappiness is no absolute or final state of affairs, no final judgment. This is (even despite a first impression to the contrary in Schopenhauer) always the underplaying, sense-conferring, or consoling answer.

But how can something as unrelativizable as unhappiness be relativized? The radical Christian answer to the question in philosophy since the early Church Fathers is, if I understand correctly, this: in this world unhappiness is in fact so unrelativizably present that it cannot be relativized *in* this world but only at most *with* the world. This means that this world itself must then be relativized, with its condition of unhappiness and with its central cause of unhappiness, namely sin,<sup>2</sup> for the sake of the world of grace and redemption which the divine Savior promises. In the meantime, unhappiness will hold dominion here; but happiness will triumph there. This word of comfort — so extreme positions put it — is the sole happiness which is possible in this still corrupt world: consolation through faith.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See especially Augustine, *De Libro Arbitrio* (A.D. 395). Compare H. Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), pp. 85ff.

<sup>3</sup> Compare R. Spaemann's article, “Glück, Glückseligkeit” in, *Historisches Wörterbuch*

This, in philosophy, is the radical Christian meaning of human happiness in unhappiness.

This answer, it seems to me, finally gets into difficulties because of the ascendancy of "this worldliness" to absoluteness in modern times. Prior to modern theories of the world's being its own first cause, of its autonomy, and other equivalent conceptions, this answer begins in the philosophical insistence that this world — this side of its extension in salvation history [*Heilsgeschichte*] between the fall into sin (as source of unhappiness) and definitively achieved redemption (as source of happiness) — is [God's] creation. In this way unhappiness and happiness, severed from sin and redemption, finally become statements about the creation which are neutral with respect to salvation history. Therein is already contained the latent possibility — to take up and push a thought of Hans Blumenberg<sup>4</sup> — that the cause and effect relation of sin-unhappiness and redemption-happiness is inverted — that in the end unhappiness will proceed no longer from sin but the other way around: sin from unhappiness, just as perhaps happiness will proceed no longer from redemption but redemption from happiness. However, not only through this radicalizing does unhappiness become a statement about creation which directly burdens the Creator. If there is a God, why then is there not only happiness in this creation, among his creatures, but also unhappiness? This question, with a view to justifying God, now becomes inescapable. It paraphrases that first thoroughly modern philosophical *pensum* which received its name through Leibniz in 1710: theodicy.<sup>5</sup> As in comprehending happiness in unhappiness overall, the solution to this problem depends upon relativizing unhappiness. But now, after attainment of absoluteness for this world, in the modern period it is no longer possible to resolve it by making unhappiness relative along *with* the world, as it was previously in the radical Christian fashion. One can now succeed only through relativizing unhappiness *in* this world.

This is what the classic, Leibnizean theodicy and its successor, namely modern philosophy of history beginning around 1750,<sup>6</sup> seek to achieve in teleologizing unhappiness. I would like to explain this in the next section. And in the two following sections I would like

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*der Philosophie*, ed. by J. Ritter, Vol. III (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1974), pp. 691ff. N. Hinske, in, "Glück und Enttäuschung," *Anatomie des Glücks*, ed. by H. Kundler (Köln, 1971), pp. 216-229, undertakes a representative philosophical actualization of this position, connected to the post-patristic proposition of Thomas Aquinas apropos of this problem "Quod ultima hominis felicitas non sit in hac vita" and with a view to a phenomenon which E. Bloch in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Second Edition (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1959), pp. 348ff, describes as the "melancholy of accomplishment."

<sup>4</sup> Expressed in a conversation in 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (1710).

to explain *this* phenomenon: where teleologizing unhappiness fails, at least two tendencies will be important – and virulent – as conceptual derivatives of theodicy: on the one hand, the attempt to *neutralize* the problem of unhappiness together with that of happiness, and, on the other, the attempt to *balance out* the diagnosis of unhappiness through that of happiness.

2. To repeat: classical Leibnizean theodicy and its succeeding form, modern philosophy of history, seek to relativize unhappiness *in* this world by way of teleologizing it. It is an evil (*malum*) which is teleologized, understood as a requirement for the possibility of an *optimum*. This means, apropos of our theme, that unhappiness is conceived as a means to the end of the best possible happiness. And it seems to me – *horribile dictu* – that the principal structure of this solution is expressed in the sentence: “the end justifies the means.” Numbered among the protagonists of this sentence, between Machiavelli and Lenin, consequently are, if I see the matter correctly, just as much the God of Leibnizean theodicy as also, in the “second theodicy” constituted by modern philosophy of history, the subjects of history in the fullness of its forms as (Fichtean) Absolute Ego, as (Hegelian) World-Spirit and as (Marxian) revolutionary Avantgarde.

I shall explain this supposition in brief as follows. Bismarck said that politics is the art of the possible.<sup>7</sup> Leibniz apparently thought that creation is the art of the best possible. The political art of the possible always goes to the point at which one must make allowance for the unacceptable and always raises the question as to that for which one is prepared to make allowances. Creation as the art of the best possible also implies, according to Leibniz, that God must make allowance for the unpleasant and that for just this reason he may be justified in the face of his creatures’ unhappiness and justified precisely as good. For, if there is no “bad,” there is no “best.” He must “allow” evil as a condition of the best possible world: Optimal happiness as end justifies unhappiness as means.<sup>8</sup> What I mean is this: precisely this concept – the teleologizing of unhappiness – and precisely this principle – the end justifies the means – which should

<sup>6</sup> For a synopsis of this dating, compare R. Koselleck’s article “Geschichte/Historie,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Vol. II, ed. by O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975), esp. pp. 58ff.

<sup>7</sup> Compare G. Büchmann, *Geflügelte Worte* (Berlin: Praktisches Wissen, 1952), p. 293.

<sup>8</sup> Compare Leibniz, op. cit., esp. I. 21ff and *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. by Gerhardt, VI, pp. 115ff. Compare H. Schepers, “Zum Problem der Kontingenz bei Leibniz. Die beste der möglichen Welten,” in *Collegium Philosophicum. Studien, Joachim Ritter zum 60. Geburtstag* (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1965), esp. pp. 333-350. Paralleling Max Weber’s relevant distinction in ethics, one could (and perhaps *must*, in order to maintain Schepers’ agreement and to give Leibniz his due) speak of Leibniz’ asserting a responsibility-Creator against a disposition-Creator and – paralleling the *Realpolitiker* – a *Realkreator* acting under the “force of circumstances,” of “compatibility,” and “best possibility.”



confirm God as good, awaken doubt about his goodness.

Because the Enlightenment, in the context of methodological doubt,<sup>9</sup> had reduced the devil — traditional worker of unhappiness and evil genius who has gone unmentioned up to this point — from a believed-in reality to a fictive device of argumentation, perhaps it was all but inevitable that it should style God a bit like the devil in order to fill the vacuum. Moreover, this was achieved precisely by means of the “optimistic” justification of the goodness of God mentioned above. The Lisbon earthquake made this development apparent, perhaps, and for that reason had a world-wide impact.<sup>10</sup>

In any case, as an immediate consequence of this, the view carried that theodicy does not succeed where — as for Leibniz — God is exonerated *from* this principle. And this negative result and fate of the classic Leibnizean form of theodicy I wish here to designate the first failure in teleologizing unhappiness. If the principle “the end justifies the means” — that is, the teleologizing of unhappiness — is thereby nonetheless unimpaired as principle of creation, it must, in the end, have the following consequence: for the sake of his goodness, God must be liberated from the role of Creator and, to save his goodness, Not-Being must be ascribed to him or even required of him. Modern philosophy of history draws this conclusion when it proclaims man as creator in place of God. It thereby in fact becomes that which it sometimes expressly<sup>11</sup> lays claim to being: theodicy consistently carried through, theodicy through atheism *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, as I like to call it.<sup>12</sup>

However, now that in philosophy of history men become creators and make their own historical world, as Absolute Ego, World-Spirit or revolutionary Avantgarde, they now become the teleologizers of unhappiness. For now that is what men themselves decree and practice: the end state of happiness at the completion of history jus-

<sup>9</sup> Descartes, *Meditationes* I, 10ff. Compare R. Spaemann's article “Genius malignus” in, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. III, pp. 309-10.

<sup>10</sup> Voltaire, *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne* (1756). Compare also to H. Weinrich, “Literaturgeschichte eines Weltereignisses: das Erdbeben von Lissabon” in, *Literatur für Leser*, ed. by H. Weinrich (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), pp. 64-76. The history of the Prussian Academy's prize question about optimism, formulated in 1753, shows that the earthquake gave resonance to a disquiet which was already present. Compare A. von Harnack, *Geschichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, Vol. I, part 1 (1900), p. 404, as well as, for example, D. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1776, written in 1751 and following), parts X and XI (Philo's Position). What interests me here is the temporal coincidence between the “failure” of the “optimistic” theodicy and the genesis of a “philosophy of history” explicitly calling itself by this name. The fact that both of these are philosophies in the style of a court case underlies the fact that philosophy of history must be understood as the successor to Leibnizean theodicy.

<sup>11</sup> Compare especially Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*; or, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1822 and following), Theorie Werkausgabe Vol. XII, 28 and 539.

<sup>12</sup> Compare Odo Marquard, *Schwierigkeiten mit der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 65 and 70; on this thesis generally pp. 52ff.

tifies the unhappiness of the steps along the path of progress to this completion: that is, the unhappiness that the steps entail, because they are not yet the completion, and the unhappiness that must be inflicted on them in order that they be overcome. Men are now themselves responsible for this double unhappiness and they cannot endure it. Therefore — and of necessity — they develop the artifice of not having been responsible: They designate human scapegoats — devils within the race: human monsters upon whom the unhappiness of history can be laid to account so that the agents of progress can style themselves as exclusive bringers of happiness and as redeemers,<sup>13</sup> no matter how great the unhappiness in history becomes.

This neo-Manicheanism of the established philosophy of history makes us recognize that teleologizing unhappiness in philosophy of history turns into the compulsory search for enemies of mankind whom one can hate and combat as dark demiurges of unhappiness in the historical world and that this search is equally productive of unhappiness. This teleologizing ends in the unhappy state — a compulsion to find enemies — which is itself still supposedly justified by a final end. And this negative result and fate of the second theodicy, in modern philosophy of history, I term here the second failure in teleologizing unhappiness.

The conclusion to this admittedly very summary consideration is therefore this: that the teleologizing of unhappiness founders twice, first in classic theodicy and then in modern philosophy of history. Having already recapitulated in a variant form what I have said repeatedly up to this point, I now repeat the thesis which here concerns me, because it possibly contains a little something new. My thesis, as already has been said, is this: where teleologizing unhappiness fails in the form sketched here — and it happens twice in succession — at least two other tendencies become important and virulent, first, as conceptual derivatives of theodicy, and then as conceptual derivatives of philosophy of history. These are, on the one hand, the attempt to *neutralize* the problem of unhappiness together with that of happiness, and on the other hand the attempt to *balance out* the diagnosis of unhappiness with that of happiness.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Compare M. Sperber, "Die polizistische Geschichtsauffassung," in *Die Achillesferse*, ed. by M. Sperber (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1969), pp. 75f and R. Koselleck, "Zur politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe," in *Positionen der Negativität*, ed. by H. Weinrich, in *Poetik und Hermeneutik*, VI (Munich, 1975), esp. pp. 92-104.

<sup>14</sup> Worthy of consideration is whether this coupling of neutralizing and balancing is possibly an extreme variation of the coupling of versions of happiness stressed by R. Spaemann in "Die Philosophie als Lehre vom Glück," in *Die Frage nach dem Glück*, ed. by G. Bien (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978), namely "self-rule," that is, self-preservation in the face of actuality (as, for example, in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I; Christianity; modern forms of progressivism). If I see the matter correctly, the coupling in forming happiness metaphors (observer, sea voyage) pertinent to this has been examined by H. Blumenberg in "Beobachtungen an Metaphern," in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 15 (1971), esp. pp.

3. By the term "neutralizing" here I mean the attempt to place philosophically unsolved problems in parentheses. It is evident that philosophy must develop the inclination to get free of the problem of unhappiness if it cannot succeed in solving it by teleologizing. However, the development of the problem in the area of theodicy has in the end so closely bound up the problem of happiness with that of unhappiness that henceforth philosophy can neither discuss the one without the other nor get free of the one without the other. A transcendental bond, so to speak, has arisen between the two. Neutralizing the problem of unhappiness is therefore no longer possible without simultaneously neutralizing the problem of happiness as well. From this arises my thesis that a representative trend in modern philosophy, especially in ethics, renounces happiness as the leading problem is the unavoidable price which philosophy pays in order to get free of the unsolved problem of unhappiness and its weight, in the wake of the foundering of classic theodicy. As a result, there exists here a negative bond between the question concerning happiness and that concerning unhappiness which consists in the now unavoidably undissolvable, shared character of their neutralization.

The protagonist in this neutralization is Kant. I restrict myself here to the following very brief remark. It seems profitable to interpret Kant's critique of eudaimonism, his formalism, and his favoring of duty<sup>15</sup> in the human make-up — which is neutral on the happiness-unhappiness question — as the price which he must pay in his ethics in order to avoid the press of the unhappiness problem. Where Leibniz' classical form of theodicy founders in its attempt to master the unhappiness problem, where on that account man prepares himself to take reality, of his own power, under his own control, and where he does not, however, forget his finitude in the process — that is, his not being omnipotent — so that there are not yet significant illusions about mastering the problem of unhappiness in philosophy of history, there, in Kant, must philosophy unburden itself of the unsolvable problem of unhappiness at the price of suspending happiness as a decisive goal and theme of ethics. I propose taking this into account among all the "metaphysical motives in the formation of critical Idealism"<sup>16</sup> as a contributing motive for the Kantian renunciation of happiness as a principal problem in philosophy.

171ff. P. Probst has examined the corresponding coupling in expectations of failure in achieving happiness, that is, the coupling of negative conditions of anxiety as an opposite to happiness (anxiety of losing something/anxiety of missing something) in *Politik und Anthropologie. Untersuchungen zur Theorie und Genese der philosophischen Anthropologie der Gegenwart in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974), esp. pp. 40f.

<sup>15</sup> Hence all that Hegel in *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), §§105-141 (English: *The Philosophy of Right*) criticized about the standpoint of "morality." Compare J. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969).



4. Where, however, the theme happiness is held fast in philosophy, this results in the search for a *balancing* of unhappiness, in contrast to neutralizing it. In my view, the phenomenon of a boom in the literature on the subject of happiness in the eighteenth century and especially in France, impressively illustrated by Robert Mauzi,<sup>17</sup> was a protective counter-measure against the already virulent "Kantian temptation" to surrender happiness as a relevant philosophical theme.

If philosophy nevertheless passionately holds fast to the problem of happiness, and does so, moreover, with the congenial attitude that happiness is much too important to be separated from ethics, it must then also hold on to the problem of unhappiness, because of the above-mentioned transcendental bond between both problems. But, if one is concerned about happiness, what does one do philosophically with unhappiness if one can no longer teleologize it and is not yet willing to neutralize it? One must see if something — and what possibly — counterbalances unhappiness. Herein is contained the hypothesis that unhappiness in this world is unhappiness balanced by happiness, whether sufficiently or insufficiently, equitably or inequitably.

It is easy to see that it is the notion of compensation which must become important here. This is, among other things, the notion according to which the two allegorical blindfolded ladies, Happiness and Justice<sup>18</sup> are placed in relationship to each other. Although the notion of compensation is older than modern theodicy,<sup>19</sup> it here arises in the related field of interest from the legacy and bankrupt estate of theodicy. For Leibniz, after all, was of the opinion (and I introduce only one quotation here) that "the Creator of Nature has compensated for evil and deficiencies by means of countless comforts." And the young Kant, who at that time still sought to defend the "optimistic" theodicy of Leibniz, wrote in 1755 that "Compensation for evil is the real purpose which the divine Creator had in view."<sup>20</sup> Now,

<sup>16</sup> H. Heimsoeth, "Metaphysische Motive in der Ausbildung des kritischen Idealismus," in, *Kant-Studien* 29 (1924), 121-159.

<sup>17</sup> R. Mauzi, *L'idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée française au XVIIIème siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960; third edition, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> In my opinion, it is a desideratum in the study of emblems and in iconography to investigate the genealogical connection between the two women with blindfolds, namely *Justitia* with the scale and *Fortuna* with the ball. Were they perhaps once identical? sisters? or otherwise related? Or what is the relationship? Since, to my knowledge, Happiness is not always represented blindfolded, the additional question arises: Under what genealogical, historical conditions does the version of the "seeing" and of "blind" Happiness Predominate?

<sup>19</sup> Compare my article "Kompensation," in, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. IV, ed. by J. Ritter and K. Gründer (Basel/Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 912-918. Also, my essay "Kompensation. Überlegungen zu einer Verlaufsfigur geschichtlicher Prozesse" (1975/76), in, *Historische Prozesse*, ed. by K. G. Faber and Chr. Meier (Munich: dtv, 1978), pp. 330-62.

after the first failure of the grand attempt at teleologizing, this allied thesis of classical theodicy rises to a principal notion: Unhappiness is balanced by happiness in that happiness compensates for unhappiness and perhaps this counterbalancing itself constitutes happiness — that is, happiness in unhappiness.

I emphasize the change in viewpoint: the teleologizer is certain about purpose and reckons unhappiness a means, and, if necessary, wholesale (*en gros*) with “determining judgment.” The compensator knows unhappiness and seeks a possible counterbalance (*Ausgleich*) retail (*en détail*) and with “reflecting judgment.”<sup>21</sup> The thought of the former is directed towards a goal; the thought of the latter is an escape from unhappiness. For that reason, any possible balance must now be made as concrete as possible and its contents made transparent: the many kinds of balance (*Balance*) necessitate a philosophical balance-sheet (*Bilanz*) specified as far as possible. I mention here briefly three relevant philosophical problem complexes.

Firstly, there is, as one can say, the *individual balancing* (*Balan-cierung*) and *balancing-out* (*Bilanzierung*) of happiness and unhappiness. I can express what I mean here by reference to a book first published in 1808, an unoriginal compilation of incisive and relevant ideas which appeared too late, yet nevertheless accentuates them in an interesting way: Pierre-Hyacinthe Azai’s<sup>22</sup> work, *Des compensations dans les destinées humaines*, a “*traité de la justice providentielle*” (“a treatise on providential justice”)<sup>23</sup> which has happiness (*bonheur*) in view and which is at the same time a treatise “*de la sagesse* [“on wisdom”].<sup>24</sup> It is the wise man who can most effectively counterbalance unhappiness in that he does not concentrate on the

<sup>20</sup> Leibniz, *Théodicée*, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 409: “L’auteur de la nature a compensé ces maux et autres qui n’arrivent que rarement par mille commodités ordinaires et continuelles” (“The Author of Nature has compensated for these evils and others, which occur only rarely, by thousands of normal, continual comforts”); Kant, *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio*, A. A. I, 405: “Nam ea ipsa malorum ... compensatio ... est propria ille finis, quem ob oculos habuit divinus artifex”; or “A New Exposition of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge,” in, *Kant’s Conception of God: A Critical Exposition of its Metaphysical Development, together with a translation of Nova Dilucidatio*, trans. F. E. England (New York: The Dial Press, 1930).

<sup>21</sup> Compare Kant’s distinction in the *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard [(1892) New York: Hafner/Macmillan, 1951], pp. 15ff.

<sup>22</sup> P. H. Azai’s (1766-1845), *Des compensations dans les destinées humaines*, 3rd. ed. [Paris, 1818 (first ed. 1808)]. On the philosophy of Azai’s, compare J. Schwieger, *Der Philosoph Pierre Hyacinthe Azais* (Bonn, 1913).

<sup>23</sup> Azai’s, op. cit. I XII: it is a “tableau de toute la félicité que l’homme peut connaître” (“list of every bliss which man can know” — 350); it has to do with “L’homme qui poursuit le véritable bonheur” (“the man who pursues true happiness” — 345). Compare Definition 29: “Le bonheur absolu est la jouissance de tous les biens particuliers auxquels notre nature peut atteindre; le malheur absolu en est la privation” (“Absolute happiness is the enjoyment of all the particular goods to which our nature can attain; absolute unhappiness is the want of them”).

<sup>24</sup> With the theme “vivre pour la sagesse” (“live for wisdom”), op. cit., p. 6.

negative element but on something else instead. He is the one who is best able to compensate. This is, of course, an old notion. Cicero writes in what is, as far as I know, the oldest remark on compensation in philosophical literature (*De natura deorum* 1. ix. 23) that "there are so many unpleasantnesses in life which the wise — in contrast to the *"stulti"* ["foolish"] — can alleviate by compensation with amenities."<sup>25</sup> This now becomes important, post-teleologically, in the period of the death throes of theodicy. If the wise man is above all he who as a well-balanced (*ausgeglichen*) individual is able to live in a well-balanced way, then the art of balance or equalization (*Ausgleich*) will be decisive. This is compensation as an individual technique for alleviating unhappiness by indirectly attaining happiness.

Secondly, there is, one can say, the *ontological balancing and balancing-out of unhappiness and happiness*. It is really not enough if wise, exceptional individuals succeed in achieving equalization. The question must be whether counterbalancing unhappiness through happiness belongs to generalizable conditions of mankind and of the world. From this will then come not merely a program of quasi-empirical inquiries, statistical calculations, psychological deliberations and, in addition, various sorts of original subtleties concerning compensation. What is especially interesting in this is whether, on the happiness-unhappiness balance-sheet of this world, unhappiness preponderates (Maupertius, *Essai de philosophie morale* of 1749)<sup>26</sup> or happiness (as in Antoine de Lasalle's *La balance naturelle* of 1788)<sup>27</sup> or whether happiness and unhappiness come out evenly, as Kant, among many others, thinks in his uncommonly interesting work of 1763 apropos of this, *Negative Größen*.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the question arises whether happiness-balances of this

<sup>25</sup> "Deinde quod ita multa sunt incommoda in vita, ut ea sapientes commodorum compensatione leniant" ("Next, that the discomforts in life are so numerous that the wise alleviate them by the compensation of comforts").

Compare Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* V. xxxiii. 95: "itaque hac usum compensatione sapientem, (ut) et voluptatem fugiat, si ea maiorem dolorem effectura sit, et dolorem suscipiat maiorem efficientem voluptatem" ("and so the wise man will employ a system of counterbalancing which enables him both to avoid pleasure, should it be likely to ensure greater pain, and submit to pain where it ensures greater pleasure"; English translation by J. E. King in *Cicero* Vol. XVIII, Loeb Classical Library, p. 521).

<sup>26</sup> In accord with P. Bayle's example in *Réponse aux questions d'un Provincial* (1704), *Oeuvres diverses* III, esp. pp. 650ff.

<sup>27</sup> In accord with Leibniz' example in *Théodicée*, III, 251ff, *op. cit.* VI, p. 266: "que même en cette vie les biens surpassent les maux, que nos commodités surpassent nos incommodités" ("that even in this life goods surpass evils, that our comforts surpass our discomforts"), compare ff.

<sup>28</sup> Kant, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (1763), A. A. II, 179ff, esp. 180-82 in connection with the "second proposition," 197: To measure the "sum total of the happiness of human life" is indeed an "unsolvable task for men"; nevertheless Kant does not agree (181/182) with "the calculus" of Maupertius with its "negative result," but instead asserts generally "a result which is equal to zero" (197). This would seem to me to include that "zero" which Kant determines for the context "happiness" (*Glückseligkeit*) and "desire" or else "aversion" as "equilibrium" (181).



kind are founded on general laws of nature. In this connection, in my view, Newton's doctrine of the powers "attraction" and "repulsion," which indeed influenced Freud on Eros and the death instinct,<sup>29</sup> played an important role in the philosophy of happiness at the time and not least in the materialistic philosophy of happiness:<sup>30</sup> a 'yes' to happiness through an attitude of accepting its attraction, a 'no' to unhappiness through an attitude of warding off its repulsion.<sup>31</sup> As *realrepugnant*<sup>i</sup> forces, they limit each other to a condition of equilibrium and it is these forces of which reality consists (that is, N.B., and if I rightly understand it, a kind of "*isosthenes diaphonia*": the entire world would then be, as it were, a skeptic, but only incidentally so).

Mediated in the end by Kant's *Negative Größen* and by the major section of his *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* on *Dynamik*,<sup>ii</sup> this fundamental concept became a central thesis in Schelling's philosophy of nature in the construction of "points of indifference."<sup>32</sup> And this, it seems to me, is an informative genealogy of a philosophy which in its essence begins to evolve into a guarantor of human happiness. The same fundamental concept then leads, in Azai's book on compensation cited above, to an extreme doctrine of equalization: Every unhappiness finds its compensation. So it is that thus, through the *judicia commutativa* of God and with the help of Nature, the happiness-unhappiness balance-sheet is evened out in the world, for every single man and on that account for all men: "tous les hommes sont égaux par leur sort" ["all men are equal through their lot"]<sup>33</sup> The principal equality is thus not only valid *formally* in terms of everyman's status before the law but, with re-

<sup>29</sup> Freud, *Abriß der Psychoanalyse* (1938), *Gesammelte Werke* (London, 1940-1968), Vol. XVII, 71; English: *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, in, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, James Strachey, General Editor (London: Hobart Press and Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1962), Vol. XXIII, 148.

<sup>30</sup> Compare A. Schmidt, "Zum Begriff des Glücks in der materialistischen Philosophie," in, *Was ist Glück? Ein Symposium der Carl Friedrich v. Siemens-Stiftung* (Munich: dtv, 1976), pp. 55-107.

<sup>31</sup> For interpretation, compare W. Szilasi, *Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft* (Bern, 1961), p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> Kant, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen*, etc., A. A. II, Chapter 3; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786), A. A. IV, esp. 496ff; or *The Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. James Ellington (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970); Schelling, *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797), *Sämtliche Werke* II, esp. 187ff; and *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801), esp. §§45ff, S. W. IV, 130ff. On Fichte's appeal to the "Negative Größen," which is important in the history of mediation, compare *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), *Werke* (ed., I. H. Fichte) I, 110.

<sup>33</sup> Azai's, *op. cit.*, I, 29. The notion of a general "balancement équitable" (*op. cit.* I, x) was current so long beforehand that it could be a component in the didactic literature. H. Hudde has called my attention to Sylvain Maréchal, *Apologues modernes, à l'usage du Dauphin, premières leçons du fils aîné d'un Roi*, 2nd Edition [Brussels, 1789 (first ed., 1788)]: there Lesson XLV treats of "La Balance," that is, first of all the scales and then the philo-

gard to happiness, is also *materially* valid through the balance-sheet of everyman's lot. One may think that this indeed sounds like something too good to be true.

Therefore — and thirdly — comes the attempt which suggests itself when things are in truth not so fine, namely the attempt to balance unhappiness by happiness as a *pragmatic program of social progress*, the correction of fortune (*corriger la fortune*) carried out or calculated according to a plan or the compensating of unhappiness (*compenser le malheur*) right up to the present — up to compensatory fiscal policy of the Keynes School<sup>34</sup> and to the "compensatory education" of our contemporary semi-absolute educators<sup>35</sup> in which prospects for growth and training are indeed important as prospects for happiness.

If equalization (*Ausgleich*) with regard to happiness is not the prevailing state of affairs, then it is made into a program. If equalization is not already the case, then it will come about in time, at least in the future. The tendency toward balancing and balancing-out, produced by a foundering theodicy's need for an answer, turns over, so to speak, onto the temporal aspect. The move into the progressive is a phenomenon of over-turning. My hypothesis, therefore, is that balance-, balancing-out-, and measurement-mad programs for happiness, which in this special case are utilitarian, arise out of the spirit of compensation-systems which are just as balance-, balancing-out- and measurement-mad, and which flourish as a consequence of failing theodicy.<sup>36</sup> It is for these happiness programs — and precisely for those with the principle "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" — that the question indeed unavoidably arises: how, through compensations, are those who do not belong to "the greatest number," and who have less happiness than "the greatest," compensated or how can they be compensated? The chevalier de Chastellux more or less asked the same question in 1771 in his book *De la Félicité publique* and then asserted "*le bonheur se compense assez*" ["happiness compensates itself sufficiently"].<sup>37</sup>

sophical thought: 'C'étoit une balance faite avec beaucoup de justesse. J'y pesai les biens et les maux de la vie. Elle resta dans un équilibre assez parfait. Elle m'apprit que tout est compensé dans la vie' ("It was a scale made with great exactness. I weighed on it the goods and evils of life. It remained in nearly perfect equilibrium. It taught me that everything is compensated in life." p. 51)

<sup>34</sup> A. H. Hansen, *Fiscal Policy and Business Cycles* (New York, 1941), esp. pp. 261-300.

<sup>35</sup> Among them, S. Bloom, A. Davis and R. Hess, Editors, *Compensatory Education for Culturally Deprived* (New York, 1958); G. Iben, *Kompensatorische Erziehung*, 3rd Edition (Munich, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> From the happiness-unhappiness balance-sheet by means of a calculus of the amount of happiness rather in Maupertius' sense, down to the "Hedonistic calculus" in the manner of J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) in the *Works of J. Bentham*, ed. by John Bowring (Edinburgh, 1843), Vol. 1, pp. 15ff.

5. I incline to the view that the triumph of the *notion of indirectly resulting states of happiness* — which is a scarcely disguised theory of indirect happiness, of happiness in unhappiness — is also connected since the eighteenth century to the above-sketched need to discover balances and compensations, which need arose through the downfall of classic theodicy. In the complex “happiness in unhappiness,” the concept of compensation indeed covers both a weak version: that there are compensations for unhappiness which come one’s way more or less by chance, and a strong version: that compensations are compelled by unhappiness and potentials for happiness are thereby engendered which would never come about without unhappiness. Happiness in unhappiness: that is here either, in the weak version, happiness *despite* unhappiness or, in the strong version, happiness *through* unhappiness.

It is especially the second, and strong version — the form happiness-in-unhappiness as “happiness *through* unhappiness” — which was topical in the eighteenth century and maintains its topicality up to the present, and which precisely on that account renders the object of my reflections up to this point topical or current. This form is constructed on the model of the notion of the “*felix culpa*” (“happy fault”): only because men, unhappily, sin, does God — happiness in unhappiness — come into the world.<sup>38</sup> Employing the same form,

<sup>37</sup> Chastellux, chevalier de (anonymous), *De la Félicité publique ou Considerations sur le sort des hommes dans les différentes époques de l’histoire* [(Amsterdam, 1772), quoted by R. Bury, *The Idea of Progress. An Inquiry into its Origins and Growth* (1932 New York, 1955), p. 190 — I am grateful to H. Hudde for this reference], compare pp. 186ff, and also the formulation of the question by O. Höffe in *Einführung in die utilitaristische Ethik* (Munich: Beck, 1975), p. 10: “Can the suffering of the one be counterbalanced by a greater amount of enjoyment on the part of the other?” For this, as I quote from later utilitarianism, O. Höffe, *Strategien der Humanität* (Freiburg/Munich: Alber, 1975), pp. 160-61, “established the so-called compensation criterion: A change is considered as a collective improvement if the potential beneficiaries of the change can fully compensate the potential losers without forfeiting the entire increase in advantage”; N. Kaldor, “Welfare Propositions of Economics and Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility” in *Economic Journal* 49 (1939), pp. 549-52; J. R. Hicks, “The Foundation of Welfare Economics,” *ibid.*, pp. 692-712. This “compensation criterion” is, if I understand correctly, a predecessor of Rawls’ “difference principle” which belongs to that extent in the history of the effects of compensation theories. It is plausible that this problem of compensation, as a problem of punishment and compensation (*Entschädigung*) of the injured, can arise also in the case of an excess of happiness illegally obtained precisely at the expense of others. Jeremy Bentham’s frequent use of the word “compensation” (to which O. Höffe has called my attention) has this context. Thus, for Bentham, punishment in the form of compensation, as satisfaction through monetary remuneration, has the advantage that, in accord with the principle of the greatest possible happiness, it does not increase the total of evil by unproductively setting one evil on top of another, but instead decreases the total of evil by annulling or alleviating it. Compare J. Bentham, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 94, 140; also his *Principles of Penal Law*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, esp. p. 405. Compare also 371ff; the tendency in penal law “to reduce as much as possible all the evil of offences to that which a pecuniary compensation will cure,” p. 578.

<sup>38</sup> Compare Leibniz, *Théodicée*, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 108. ‘Nous savons d’ailleurs que souvent un mal cause un bien, auquel on ne seroit point arrivé sans ce mal ... ne chantet-on pas la veille de Pâque dans les Eglises du rite Roman: O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, Quod Christi morte deletum est! O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum/ Meruit habere redemptorem!’ (“We know, moreover, that often an evil effects a good to which one would not at all have come without this evil ... Is it not chanted on the eve of Easter in Churches



Pope speaks in the *Essay on Man* of "happy frailties" through which "the joy, the peace, the glory of mankind"<sup>39</sup> come to be. But Malthus also writes in the same vein in the *Principal of Population* that there is unhappiness and evil "in the world, not to create despair, but activity"<sup>40</sup> and points it out in order to provide comfort against the melancholy upshot of unhappiness and evil.

An impressive series of articulations of this form can be illustrated. Mandeville: There are, unhappily, private vices, but these are — happiness in unhappiness — public virtues.<sup>41</sup> Or Herder: Man is, unhappily, a stepchild of Nature, but — happiness in unhappiness — only because of this does he have speech.<sup>42</sup> Or Kant: There are, unhappily, antinomies, but — happiness in unhappiness — they rouse from "dogmatic slumber";<sup>43</sup> or: There are, unhappily, historical antinomies, but — happiness in unhappiness — they give wings to progress.<sup>44</sup> Or Schiller: There is, unhappily, the fall into sin, but — happiness in unhappiness — precisely through this does culture come about.<sup>45</sup> Or Hegel: There is, unhappily, the irrational, but — happiness in unhappiness — precisely through this is the rational realized. This is the "cunning of reason"<sup>46</sup> which is forthwith completed by a kind of cunning of sensibility by which the nineteenth and early twentieth

of the Roman rite: 'O surely necessary sin of Adam which was effaced by the death of Christ? O happy fault which merited having such and so great a redeemer!'). Compare Schopenhauer's sarcastic variation of Leibniz's notion in: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Werke, ed. by Löhneysen, Vol. II, p. 746: "I cannot ascribe to the Théodicée ... any other merit than this, that it gave occasion later for the immortal *Candide* of the great Voltaire; whereby certainly Leibniz' oft-repeated and lame excuse for the evil of the world, that the bad sometimes brings about the good, received a confirmation which was unexpected by him" [*The Will to Live: Selected Writings of Arthur Schopenhauer*, ed. by Richard Taylor (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975), p. 210].

<sup>39</sup> A. Pope, *An Essay on Man* (1733/34), Ep. II. 6, verses 241ff.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population As it Affects the Future Improvement of Society* (London, 1798); reprinted as *The First Essay on Population* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1965), p. 395.

<sup>41</sup> B. de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1725).

<sup>42</sup> Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), Werke, ed. by Suphan, Vol. V, esp. pp. 27ff.

<sup>43</sup> Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788), A. A. V, 107; or *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Library of Liberal Arts; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), p. 111: "that the antinomy of pure reason ... is the most fortunate perplexity" because it "serves as a very powerful agent to rouse philosophy from its dogmatic slumber": Kant, *Prolegomena* (1783), A. A. IV, 338; or, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Library of Liberal Arts; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), p. 86.

<sup>44</sup> Kant, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), A. A. VIII, esp. 20ff.

<sup>45</sup> Schiller, *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft nach dem Leitfaden der mosaischen Urkunde* (1790).

<sup>46</sup> Among others, Hegel in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), Theorie Werkausgabe, Vol. III, pp. 53f; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1822 and following), ed. cit., XII, p. 49.

centuries let themselves be fascinated, from Schelling through Schopenhauer and Lombroso to Lange-Eichbaum and Benn: There is, unhappily, the pathological and its passions, but — happiness in unhappiness — precisely therein is contained the chance for originality (*Genialität*) and for the sublime pleasure of art.<sup>47</sup>

And one also finds these notions then in art itself, namely in literature. Therefore, there is only a small difference whether the notion is expressed before or after the shaking of confidence which, for example, Schopenhauer presents. Friederich Hölderlin said it before Schopenhauer, Wilhelm Busch after him. Hölderlin: "Where there is, however, danger, there also waxes the saving element"; Busch: "Whoever has cares also has a drink."<sup>48</sup> Both the formulation from "Patmos" and that from the *Fromme Helene*<sup>48</sup> indicate the same form, only in a different stage. So it is, therefore, that across the chain of articulations only briefly indicated here, the notion of indirectly resulting positivities comes to the present. There, in the field of psychoanalysis,<sup>49</sup> the notion is explicitly reformulated through Adler and Jung as a compensation theory — with a grand but false sense of originality — and is finally elevated, shortly thereafter, to the principal anthropological category: man is, unhappily, a being of deficiencies, but — happiness in unhappiness — precisely that in-

<sup>47</sup> Compare my *Schwierigkeiten mit der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 85ff and 185ff.

<sup>48</sup> Hölderlin, "Patmos" (1803), *Kleine Stuttgarter Ausgabe* II, p. 173; compare p. 181, p. 181, p. 187, p. 192. W. Busch, *Die fromme Helene* (1872), chap. 16, verse 1. It would be utterly astounding if we did not find the form "happiness in unhappiness" as the stuff of great literature, that is, not only as a notion and as an isolated theme. Unfortunately, an instance does not strike me. In my view, one can suppose that it is found neither in comedy (there unhappiness is too meager) nor in tragedy (there the conclusion is too unhappy), but in epic and in smaller literary forms (fable, fairy tale). On the border between comedy and tragedy, Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* is relevant (Tellheim is, unhappily, sent away, but precisely thereby does he get Minna), perhaps not by chance in the eighteenth century (1767). (This was pointed out to me by my wife and U. Karthaus.) Since the nineteenth century, because of the victory of realism, unhappiness has become a thing of great literature, the happy-ending a theme of trivial literature. Perhaps on that account great literature has denied itself the connexion "happiness through unhappiness." Compare H. Weinrich, "Welcher Hans in welchem Glück?" and "Die Schriftsteller und das Glück. Ein Plädoyer für die Glücksforschung," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 1975, Nr. 3 (p. 70) and Nr. 8 (pp. 39-40), respectively.

In my view, one must also mention in this context the phenomenon of a "doubling of the aesthetic" that has become predominant since the eighteenth century: Next to the aesthetics of directly rendering happy (*Beglückung*, aesthetics of the beautiful) an aesthetics of indirectly rendering happy increasingly takes the lead, first in the form of a pleasure-through-aversion aesthetics of the sublime, for example, in Kant's version: our senses, unhappily, founder but — happiness in unhappiness — reason proves its power precisely thereby [*Critique of Judgement* (1790), A. A. V, 244ff; trans. J. H. Bernard (1892, New York: Hafner/Macmillan, 1951), pp. 82ff]. Compare my "On the Importance of the Theory of the Unconscious for a Theory of No Longer Fine Art," in *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism — A Collection of Essays*, ed. by R. E. Amacher and V. Lange (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 260-78, esp. p. 272f.

<sup>49</sup> Compare D. L. Hart, *Der Tiefenpsychologische Begriff der Kompensation* (Zurich, 1956).

duces compensation through exoneration [from them]. This is what the anthropology of Gehlen holds, which, meantime under growing impulse toward refinement, has undergone system theory generalization through Luhmann: The world is, unhappily, complex, but precisely that — happiness in unhappiness — induces reductions of complexity with compensation.<sup>50</sup> Thus there can be no doubt that the notion of compensation in the happiness-unhappiness thesis of indirectly resulting positivities is topical or current.

The fact that this notion becomes topical in the eighteenth century is explained by the first failure in teleologizing unhappiness at the conclusion of classical theodicy, as already indicated. That it remains topical or current in the twentieth century is explained, I think, by the second failure in teleologizing unhappiness at the end of modern philosophy of history.

For that reason as well, the happiness-in-unhappiness figure of compensation becomes powerful precisely where philosophical attention to the historical survives the end of the philosophy of history. Certain theses of Joachim Ritter are representative. I remind you here of only one, namely the thesis on the compensatory function of the aesthetic: In the modern world there occurs, according to Ritter,<sup>51</sup> a process of its objectification which is at the same time the world's disenchantment. The latter is, unhappily, a loss, but this loss is — happiness in unhappiness — compensated by the simultaneous development of an agent of a new enchantment that turns out to be a doubtful compensation for the loss of the old: that is the specific modern agent of aesthetic art. The "happiness" of this "happiness in unhappiness" is therefore an essentially indirect happiness and this is because it becomes only a secondary necessity and reality due to a loss, a primary unhappiness. This happiness is thus a "second-order- or vice-happiness," happiness through unhappiness. But this happiness-through-unhappiness — the aesthetic fascination — is a happiness. In this case, as in the last-mentioned phenomena, the expression "happiness in unhappiness" is neither a non-binding *façon de parler* [manner of speaking] nor a mere blanket reference to the *fortuna*-character of anything whatsoever that occurs, but it really means "eudaimonia." Only, in the modern world, it turns out that happiness is just what it always was (because it is something which can be neither aimed at directly nor made):

<sup>50</sup> A. Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (1940), Ninth Edition (Frankfurt: Atheneum, 1971); N. Luhmann, "Soziologie als Theorie sozialer Systeme" (1967), among others, in his *Soziologische Aufklärung I*, Fourth Edition (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1974), pp. 113-36.

<sup>51</sup> J. Ritter's Lecture "Philosophische Ästhetik," which has been delivered in several versions since 1948, unfortunately still remains unpublished. Hence, compare especially J. Ritter, *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974) in this connection and his articles "Ästhetik, ästhetisch" and "Genie," in, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie I*, pp. 555-80 and III, pp. 285-309, respectively.



namely, not a ponderable (*Pensum*)<sup>w</sup> but a co-ponderable (*Konpensum*), radicalized compensation (*Kompensation*). This must be so in a modern world in which survival is increasingly attained through the fundamental law of abstraction. In such a world indeed, happiness must to a great extent be rescued through a fundamental law of compensation. The former is the Cartesian "*je pense, je suis*" ["I think, I am"]: the latter would have to be: "*je compense, je suis*" ["I compensate, I am"].

6. Allow me one brief concluding remark. I wish to create no false impression. What I have outlined above, in the course of philosophical, historiographical speculation with quasi-systematic cadence, namely the compensation concept of happiness in unhappiness, is in the end (for the modern world as well) assuredly no all encompassing theory of happiness and, above all, no satisfactory answer to the question concerning unhappiness, but instead, for its own part, a concept with limits.

It is men who do things by substitution, who compensate. But among mortals, that always ends fatally. Humanly possible happiness is — by virtue of death alone — always only happiness in unhappiness and always means only having escaped, and this only temporarily, improbably, and always subject to recall. Indeed, I believe that the following says it: second-order happiness (*Vize-Glück*) by means of compensations covers a large part of humanly possible happiness, especially in the modern world. But unhappiness is not as a rule alleviated by compensations, but only just compensated. Sometimes compensations only conceal the fact that a cure is necessary, instead of providing the cure. This itself then constitutes unhappiness. And it is cruel as well if unhappiness and its compensations fall in different degrees to different men. To be sure, he who believes that he can renounce compensations underestimates the power of human unhappiness. Nevertheless, Jakob Burkhardt's skepticism is quite apt, as he expressed it in the last of his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, "*Über Glück und Unglück in der Weltgeschichte*." Burkhardt wrote:

The doctrine of compensations is for the most part only a disguised doctrine of desirability, and it is and remains advisable to deal sparingly with the comfort to be derived from it, since we have no convincing verdict about these losses and gains.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, there is the uncompensatable: the unhappiness which no happiness could counterbalance. On that account, one must be philosophically attentive indeed also to the *unhappiness* in "happiness in unhappiness" and to the fact that unhappiness somehow always has the last word. Freud wrote therefore, (and thought that

<sup>52</sup> J. Burkhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (1868), *Gesammelte Werke* IV, 193f, compare 191-94.

he had thereby “unwittingly steered . . . course into the harbours of Schopenhauer’s philosophy”)<sup>53</sup> “The intention that man should be ‘happy’ is not included in the plan of ‘creation’”; “Life, as we find it, is too hard for us . . .” He then quotes Fontane: “We cannot do without auxiliary constructions.”<sup>54</sup> To be sure, it does not necessarily follow that it is possible *with* them. That means, for our purposes here, that it is not possible without compensations. But whether it is really possible *with* compensations is doubtful and the doubt cannot be dismissed *ex suppositione vivendi*. In addition, the *suppositio* itself is almost brought into doubt by the old proposition “*Non nasci homini longe optimum esse*.” [“It is by far the best thing for a man not to be born”]. Kurt Tucholsky, with whom I here close, repeats this proposition and completes it:<sup>56</sup> “The best thing would be not to have been born, but,” he adds, “to whom does that happen?”

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<sup>53</sup> Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), G. W. XIII, 53; *Works*, Vol. XVIII, 49-50.

<sup>54</sup> Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), G. W. XIV, 434 and 432; *Works*, Vol. XXI, 76 and 75.

<sup>55</sup> Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* I. xlviii. 115, with reference to Euripides, *Chresphontes*; compare Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* vv. 1224-27 (with thanks to E. Pöhlmann and V. A. McCarthy for the reference and for correction. Compare Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *Werke*, ed. by Schlechta, Vol. I, 29-30.

In addition, compare Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille*, in, *Werke* (ed. by Löhneysen), II, 750ff.

<sup>56</sup> K. Tucholsky (reference not located).

## TRANSLATION NOTES

<sup>i</sup> A word coined on the model of *Realpolitic*.

<sup>ii</sup> Section Two of the work.

<sup>iii</sup> Literally, a liqueur.

<sup>iv</sup> Here begins an etymological word play which English cannot reproduce. *Pensum*, from the perfect passive participle of the Latin verb *pendere*, becomes the term for a *weight* of wool equivalent to one day’s work, then the term for the *task of a day*, and finally simply a *task*.

The sense of weighing, on scales, is contained in the word *Kompensation* (compensation), where the picture contained in the word is that of weights balanced.

A third sense of weighing, namely the weighing of thoughts [English: ponder (Latin root *pendere*, *pondus*)] is the etymology of the French verb *penser* (to think). Marquard plays on this in his variation on the famous line of Descartes.

## TELEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND CAUSAL DETERMINATION\*

Josef Simon

Translated by John Donovan and Wilfried Ver Eecke

Teleology is one of those concepts the use of which only leads to hopeless disputes which connote conflicting views of the world. In these debates, teleological thinking is judged to be characteristic of an unscientific mode of thought. One can find clear grounds in the history of ideas for such a judgment. Teleology was employed, for example, by St. Thomas Aquinas in the construction of a proof for the existence of God. Through a misunderstanding of Aquinas' usage of this concept, it is commonly held to this very day that a teleological view is committed to the tidy picture of a wise Providence which has organized nature absolutely according to purposes inherent in its divine plan. To be sure, certain popularized ideas rooted in the optimistic Enlightenment-philosophy of the eighteenth century are at work in this interpretation of an old philosophical topic. Even the term "teleology" was first coined during the Enlightenment. The concept itself, which goes back to Aristotle, as well as its use in the history of philosophy, have, however, a fundamental philosophical significance.

### I

I shall first cite Thomas in order to be able to unfold the meaning

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\* Translated from "Teleologisches Reflektieren und kausales Bestimmen." Bruno Liebrucks zum 65. Geburtstag, in *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, Band 30, Heft 3, pp. 369-388.

The author was born in 1930, studied in Cologne where he received his doctorate in 1957. He was appointed Professor of Philosophy in Frankfurt in 1971, and shortly thereafter was made "ordinarius Professor" at Tübingen. His most important publications are *Das Problem der Sprache bei Hegel* (1966), *Sprache und Raum*; *Zum Verhältnis zwischen Wahrheit und Bestimmtheit von Sätzen* (1969), *Philosophie und linguistische Theorie* (1971), and *Wahrheit als Freiheit; Zur Entwicklung der Wahrheitsfrage in der neueren Philosophie* (1978). Professor Simon is known for his studies in Hegel, but he demonstrates also a thorough familiarity with German philosophy as a whole and with classical authors.



of this concept:

We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God. (S. T. I. 2, 3)<sup>i</sup>

It is clear that this form of argumentation, based directly on Aristotle, hardly corresponds in some of its elements to what in contemporary usage is normally understood by the term "teleological thinking." Thomas argues from the *regularity* of natural events (acting always, or nearly always, in the same way) to their *purposiveness* (acting for an end). Purposiveness, therefore, stands in opposition to lawlessness and disorder as the more plausible view. Included in the concept of purposiveness is the idea that motion is guided by something, and that this guiding principle is immanent in the motion itself, thereby permitting the motion to be identified as repeating itself in one and the same way. Thus, one does not simply find abstract motion in nature. Rather, *something* moves. It moves according to *its* law, that is, according to a *particular* law, so that the movement, for this reason, can be recognized as the motion of the same thing, and, in its very repetition, as the *same* motion. It terminates in the same goal, and only because of this can it be *identified* as a distinct motion. Lacking a goal, motion would be infinite, in the sense of being open-ended. One could not tell *what kind of* motion was occurring.

Perhaps it is worth the effort to develop this thought a bit further. Teleology signifies here the concept of a completed motion, which, as such, can be identified and measured. Without such a concept, interpreted in the way we have presented it, the calculation of motion would be unthinkable. Moreover, the completion (entelechy) must be understood as conceptual, not as temporal. It is well-known that, in Aristotle's thought, time is defined as the "enumeration <ἀριθμὸς> of motion." The movement which is counting must be understood as a constant repetition of the same motion. Even the case of counting "to infinity" is, when grasped *conceptually*, finite and identifiable as this specific motion. A definite motion, in arriving at its completion, returns *each time* to its origin. This constitutes its distinctiveness as a motion. Every specific motion can be understood in its specificity only if one can determine when it is completed. Thus, I can demonstrate the instance of a specific motion inasmuch as I can show where it comes to an end and begins to repeat itself, that is, so far as it does not cease with an entirely *other* motion following.

To be sure, this is a rather trivial insight. And yet, the Aristotelian-Thomistic concept of teleology clearly depends upon the fact that one legitimately speaks of definite — that is, self-repeating and enumerable, natural motion — for example, falling, striking; but also breathing, digesting, building, etc. — in the final analysis of events that can be identified as specific ones that are repeatable. One could possibly object that such an understanding of “teleology” is quite trivial. Still, one would not wish that Thomas, in treating a question of central importance to him, should appeal to far-fetched examples. Thus, he speaks in an entirely general way of “natural bodies” (*corpora naturalia*) — that is, of something which, as a concretely existing object, is moving and does not disappear into a general and undifferentiated flux.

And yet, one of Thomas’ expressions could be upsetting. He says that we *saw* not only such self-repetitive motion, and consequently motion of the same kind. Rather, we *saw* that these natural bodies “pursued that which is *best* (*optimum*).” But, given Thomas’ usage, this really offers nothing new. The “best” means the species-characteristic. We must not read into the text our idea of a perfectly-ordered world, which stems from the popularized Enlightenment philosophy, and then object that Thomas has included among his presuppositions the idea of a well-planned world so that he may infer from this the existence of its intelligent planner. The text which we have cited does not at all speak of “the best” in *this* sense of the term. It speaks only of the determination of the species *which lies at the basis of our observation*, and which, in all of its physical circumstances, simply repeats itself and thereby remains the same. And it remains the same as long as it can repeat itself correctly (that is, “well”).

So much for the text. The conclusion need not be considered here. If the inference is logically valid, it can to be sure arrive at nothing essentially new. The important thing is that which is said in the premises. We can paraphrase the *first premise* in the following way: we do not simply *see* motion. Rather our perception *presupposes* that motions are distinct, and thus differentiated from each other, and consequently that they are self-identical and as such repeat themselves in many instances. The process of seeing essentially contains this *conceptual presupposition*. Bare motion would indeed be the dissolution of all distinction into a sort of fog, and consequently could not be *seen*. The *second premise* contains a hidden presupposition: it distinguishes between intelligent and non-intelligent beings, and employs the thesis that not every being which we see is intelligent. The concept of non-intelligent being is understood to mean that such a being could not be the author of its own determinateness. It could not have, through its own doing, the type of being in virtue of which its motions are typical motions — ones which repeat themselves.

(Even man, when viewed from a certain perspective — namely, that of his physical and vegetative motor-functions — is a *non*-intelligent being.) The God who is inferred by this proof is understood to be the source of the characteristics of the species, or the source of the specific motion of non-intelligent beings. He is the explanatory ground for the fact that we are able to see and to identify specific motions in nature, and hence *specific things*.

The real point being argued, therefore, is that the species does *not* produce *by itself* its distinguishing characteristic, and that the distinction of specific kinds (of motion) is not merely, as the Nominalists claim, a purposive arrangement *imposed* by human understanding from one point of view or another. Nor is the term “species” to be taken only in a biological sense. This line of argumentation has nothing at all to do with the view that everything in nature is harmoniously ordered or is, in the moral interpretation of the term, “the best.” When we say that “nature” produces species, and hence determinations, this is but another term for that which Thomas proposes to *call* God. We would then be attributing to nature exactly that “intelligence” which Thomas has attributed to God — namely, the capacity to regulate the species-maintaining processes. To put it quite generally, since Thomas does not talk exclusively about living beings, the term “intelligence” denotes the capacity to regulate movement which repeats itself, which is thus the presentation of something determinate as an *objective* correlate of our *empirical concepts*. Nothing more is entailed by this *kind of argumentation* in regard to the concept of intelligence, for more than this is not required.

The example of the arrow in flight underlines the point once again: the arrow itself is not conscious. It does not know the goal of its motion. That is, it has no concept of its determination as a motion which has been structured as self-completing and repeatable according to its kind. One *presupposes* an *intelligence* — that of the marksman — which one cannot directly see, just because a determinate, self-completing motion is *seen*. The argument used by N. Hartmann against teleological thinking, which points out that consciousness always belongs to goal-directedness, and that we cannot attribute goal-oriented activity to unconscious nature, is not only known by Thomas and recognized in this case; it is explicitly employed. Another appropriate example along this line would be that of the spider which builds its web without knowing anything about the flies that are supposed to be caught in it. It always completes the same structured motions which are proper to the species spider; it does not act randomly. The point of departure is not the fact that the spider builds a web “*in order to*” catch flies; rather, we begin with the observation of species-related movements. The spider is not conscious,



and therefore does not build a web “*in order to*” catch flies. Nevertheless, it does build a web. It employs identifiable motions of a specific kind, which are repeated continuously. This is the case not only in building the web, but also in breathing, digestion, etc. Its metabolism works according to specific *rules*, and thus retains its identity. The arrow in flight receives its identity from the intelligence of the marksman, who repeats the same formal pattern in successive shots. In the case of the spider, there is only the identity of the form of repeated motions which is seen. To the question as to whether we legitimately perceive motion as a *determinate* kind, repeating itself in an orderly fashion — that is, with what legitimacy we claim to *see* determinate things at all rather than having everything perish in a vortex of indeterminate motion, Thomas gives the following answer. He recognizes an intelligence behind this motion, which gives it its *form*.

## II

This answer is criticized in modern philosophy as an epistemological construct. The issue here is in no way simply a critique of teleological thinking in the narrow sense of the term as it is understood for the most part today. Rather, a much more fundamental point is at stake. It concerns the critical question of *with what right* are we at all able to claim that something *objective* corresponds to the determinate concepts which we use to perceive concrete distinctions in nature, for example, birds as opposed to fish. Put more generally, does something *objective* correspond to the concepts which allow us to distinguish motions of one kind from those of another? Kant has formulated the issue in the following way: “Does nature have a purposiveness in regard to our cognitive faculties?” (*Critique of Judgment*, XXIV)<sup>ii</sup> In every act, understood as an act of knowing, such a purposiveness is at first naively presupposed. This is also the case in the instance of the idea of a *causally*-determined nature. Teleological reflection and causal determination are thus in no way opposites. The causal relation posits something *determined* as a cause, and something different determined as an effect. It operates with predetermined concepts.

Since in the disputes between conflicting world-views in regard to the principle of teleology, teleological reflection is in most cases *opposed* to causal determination, to further clarify this issue demands that we make, within the limits imposed, a fuller investigation of the concept of causality. Here Hume’s well-known critique is a turning point. He raised the question as to whether the ascertaining of *distinct relationships* in nature does not simply rest upon the subjective principle of habit. Thus, doubt was directed not only against the assumption of an objective *causa finalis*, but precisely against the

assumption of an objective *causa efficiens*. Kant understood that doubt in regard to the latter was just as justifiable as doubt in regard to the former. This had, as he put it, "awakened him from his dogmatic slumber." In order to go beyond a mere dogmatic predilection for the concept of *causa efficiens*, we must follow the reconstruction of the *objective* meaning of the causal concept through Kant himself. Let us proceed with his results: Kant taught that such a reconstruction was only valid for the realm of appearances, not however, for "things viewed as they are in themselves." Kant proceeds from the standpoint that the hypothetical judgment-form "if . . . then" is one of the forms of the Understanding, or a "transcendental grammar" apart from which we would not be capable of thinking relationships in nature at all. There is *given* in the first place, according to Kant, an indeterminate manifold of temporal succession and spacial contiguity. Sense intuition contains, according to his critical concept of intuition, only this "uniform" manifold of the given *in general*, but not a form of relationship between (already) *determined* appearances. Kant now argues, proceeding from these presuppositions, in the following way: "I perceive that appearances succeed each other; that is, the present condition of a given thing at a certain time is opposed to what it was in its preceeding state." For example, a piece of iron, which is now 10 mm long, was previously not yet 10 mm long, but, for example, 9.9 mm in length. "Thus, I truly relate two perceptions in time." Now as Kant teaches elsewhere, a *uniform* manifold that is not qualified in regard to content is *given*. This means that we critically question the *objective* validity of our (empirical) concepts that provide content-determinations and from which we can conceive (grasp) one thing from its specific defining characteristic as the cause of the other. Under this presupposition "the act of relating is not the work of mere sensation and intuition; rather it is the product of the synthetic power of the imagination . . . this power can relate two conceived situations in two ways: either the one or the other receives priority. For time itself cannot be perceived." Thus, time cannot be used to determine which of the situations perceived by me is *objectively* prior and which is *objectively* subsequent. In perception, therefore, I am dealing only with a *subjective* series. "In order that the series be recognized as determined," Kant continues, "the relationship between both situations must be so thought that it is determined which one is prior and which one is subsequent, and that it be determined necessarily, thereby excluding a reversal of the relationship. The concept, however, which leads to a necessary synthetic unity can only be a pure concept of the Understanding. It cannot originate in perception." The concept of the relationship "cause and effect," formulated in the form of the hypothetical judgment "if . . . then," is a concept of the Understanding which signifies an irreversible series

of appearances. Furthermore, "it is only because we subject the series of appearances, and hence all change, to the law of causality, that experience itself" (of *objective* relationships) is possible (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 233/34).<sup>iii</sup> Causality is *a priori* because it is necessarily rooted in the concept of possible experience.

This is Kant's *proof* for the general validity of the law of causality. Hence, even Kant *begins*, like Thomas who takes his lead from Aristotle, with sense perception. We perceive relationships and *claim* their objectivity. As a philosopher *after* Hume, however, Kant, *as opposed to Thomas*, leaves open whether, following this claim, our *perception* is indeed objective. Hence, the claimed objectivity must be *given a foundation*. For Kant, this can only be done by explaining all of the changes which we observe by means of the "if . . . then" form. Only *through this means* do we project necessity into appearing nature. We must subject all observed changes to the concept of causality, because only in this way do we arrive at a *concept* of the objective validity of our perceptions.

In this consistent argument, the observation of the relationships of finality in nature is, *for the sake of the argument's consistency*, already excluded in its presuppositions. It began with the position that all the concrete forms which are found in perception can only be the result of subjective imagination. Kant speaks here of "empirical" concepts. These concepts distinguish, for instance, birds from fish, or, to put it generally: motions of *this* kind from motions of *that* kind. The critical concept of experience (which lays claim to objectivity) must begin with the dissolving of such concrete forms. Its "idea" is a universal causal relationship in *one* natural reality, and the dissolving of the in principle teleological concept of *particular* motion of the species.

But in no way can Kant be called upon as an arbitrator in world-view conflicts between causal and final conceptions of nature. Kant only clarifies the concepts, and shows thereby the meaninglessness of the conflict. This can be shown through a closer analysis of his argumentation.

The first question is what, generally speaking, constitutes a causal explanation in regard to its logical structure. We observe the change: this piece of iron has been elongated; and now we look for a cause. We are asking for a *relationship* between prior and subsequent conditions in the form of the question "why?" in order to arrive at a determinate concept of this change. In so doing, we are anticipating an answer that we are in principle willing to accept — that is, an answer which will stop us from asking the question, provided that it satisfies us. Thus, we are anticipating in a *formally a priori* way the naming of a "cause" for the motion in question. For, Kant has argued, we are unable *in any other way* to arrive at a concept of objectivity.



And yet, the specific content which is to serve as a really satisfactory answer remains completely undetermined. For example, one can answer the question as to why the iron has become elongated by saying that it was warmed. This answer is satisfactory *to the extent that* it can be related to an accepted *empirical rule* which says that iron elongates when warmed. The *pure law of causality*, however, is recognized "as simply necessary," as we have shown, only "for nature... *in general* (as object of possible experience)." (CJ, XXXII) Its necessity is based upon the effort to construct a rational concept of the possibility of experience *in general*. Naturally, nothing at all is thereby said about the necessity of the respective *contents* with which the causal "if... then" relationship is filled. Kant has formulated this in the following way: "The principle at work in recognizing bodies as substances," that is, as a unity of various qualities, "and as alterable substances," that is, as a relationship of changing situations, "is transcendental if by this it is meant that their change must have a cause." For only in this way are we able to think a *necessary* series in the process of change. The concept of cause is here anticipated in a purely transcendentially logical, or formal way. By means of it we have approached no nearer to precisely *what* the cause of the specific instance under consideration is supposed to be. Thus, according to Kant, it must remain "metaphysical" if, as of course is always necessary, further ideas which have *specific content* are joined to the concept of cause. This is true, for example, even if it is simply "asserted" that "change must have an *external* cause." For here, "the empirical concept of body (as a moving thing in space) lies at the root of this assertion." (CJ XXIX)

To claim that every motion in *physical* nature must have an *external* cause is, according to Kant, "to make an assertion" which is not covered by the proof of the transcendental nature or universal validity of the law of causality. This is so because the assertion is concerned with a particular *content*. We are no longer dealing with a transcendental law, but with an *empirical* one because a *content* is attached to the *formal* concept of cause. As an empirical law, it serves indeed as a rule to which we relate as a premise by means of which we can "make objective sense" out of our perceptions. (CPR, B. 240) An example of this would be the positing of a relationship between the heating of bodies and their being elongated. This rule is, however, from the perspective of its *content*, contingent (which, according to Popper, for example, is also the case for the origin of hypothetical laws of science). The concept of a material body signifies something that moves in a characteristically determinate way — namely, in space <for example>, in distinction to the (psychic) movement of a "thinking being," which Kant brings up as a counterexample to the empirical concept of "matter" (*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural*

*Science*,<sup>iv</sup> Preface). The motion of matter is a movement in a *different* sense than a psychic process. And thus, if one wants to justify the different starting points of the sciences, one must consider further differentiations into "specific regions." Even if the understanding "can determine nothing in an *a priori* fashion" in this regard, it must nevertheless *assume* a number of principles in order to arrive at *laws* covering such "objects." Kant speaks of "these so-called empirical laws." Thus, understanding must assume that such laws allow us to recognize order in nature, and that "this order gives us the possibility of classifying nature into genera and species." Finally, "since, for the specific varieties of natural events it may at first appear unavoidable to our understanding that *just so many differing kinds of causality* must be assumed, it nevertheless must also be assumed that these many kinds of causality can be subsumed under a *few* principles with the articulation of which we must occupy ourselves." (CJ, XXXV; emphasis by author) The "differing kinds of causality" *are*, according to Kant, thus *to be reduced* to a few. This would be the goal of science: a unified concept of nature. The actual *complete* reduction of this multiplicity to a single causal relationship is, however, impossible. It would mean the reduction of every *contentful* determination to the concept of nature. Hence, the reduction of the various *kinds* of causality also has its limit, and thus this reduction can only be understood as a *heuristic goal*.

When we talk of natures differentiated from each other, or "species" — Kant uses this term (*ibid.*) — we are once again dealing with the presupposition of a species-differentiated series of motions. We are no longer in transcendental philosophy but in metaphysics. Kant is aware of and accustomed to all of this — and thus also to the interdependency of metaphysics and transcendental philosophy in the grounding of science. But this aspect of his Critical Philosophy has not been very much noticed. His Critique attempts to show that when we employ two presuppositions: 1) that an intelligence which is different from ours or a "rationality" not open to our thinking is not to be assumed as the ground for the *determinateness* of motion, and 2) that we still have to search for a *concept* of the objectivity of concepts through which we can observe relationships in nature, we can attain such a concept only in a *purely formal* fashion. All contentful concepts, however, remain contingent — that is, from our perspective, irrational. "With respect to these," Kant tells us, "we judge that the unity of nature according to empirical laws, and the possibility of the unity of experience (as a system of empirical law) is contingent." (CJ, XXXIII) Each *individual* natural science — for example, physics which deals with the motion of *material* bodies — is naturally a "system of empirical law." Put otherwise, *we* have no rational concept of the truth of such systems, *if we are unwilling to*

*attribute it to an intelligence other than our own.* (Refer to presupposition 1 above.)

Kant is also thoroughly aware that with this he has returned to the realm of teleological thinking. For even if we have no proven *concept* of the truth of such particular systems of empirical laws, we nevertheless “necessarily *pre-suppose*” a corresponding unity in nature. Hence, “our judgment must for its own employment *assume* as an *a priori* principle that what is contingent from the perspective of human knowledge still contains a law-like unity . . . which is thinkable but not knowable from the human perspective.” Thus a “*purposiveness* of nature for our faculty of knowing” is conceived. (CJ, XXXIV) And, according to Kant, we are naturally “*pleased*” (emphasis by author) “if we come upon such a systematic unity among purely empirical laws, even though we must necessarily accept the fact that this unity exists without our being able to understand or prove it” (*ibid.*). We are *pleased* by the contingency that *empirical* science possesses a *systematic* unity. Yet, such a discovery always remains a contingency for us. That is to say, we have no concept that excludes the possibility that such a system could be entirely different. Thus, the concept of the transcendental purposiveness of nature for our conceptual faculties has the following significance: we are justified in speaking of motions as a distinct kind, complete in themselves, and repeating characteristic patterns, *because there is no other way in which we can speak about nature*. This does not contradict the concept of the causal determination of nature, but rather fills its pure categorical concept with content. And even if *we* can establish *no* concept of the objective validity or corresponding rationality of this mode of speaking, we must necessarily *presuppose* its rationality. We are *happy* if this presupposition is at least temporarily fulfilled in experience, even if we *lack* a concept of how this fulfillment occurs, leaving its occurrence, for us, essentially contingent. Empirical science is accordingly something that *satisfies* us even though a transcendental *concept* of its truth is lacking. And in this context we say, for example, that *material* movements follow their *own* laws which are typical for their species (these laws are then different from those which describe psychological motions). Nevertheless, we are unable to know if this *classification* has any objective significance at all, or if perhaps it has only happened in this way historically, within the framework, as it were, of an all encompassing history-of-science “paradigm” in the sense of Thomas S. Kuhn.

Teleological discourse is thus concerned not only with organic nature, but is already present in principle in those instances in which we are talking about motion of a *certain quality* — that is, about things which are objectively identifiable. The determination of a course of motion as self-repetitively structured is simply more appar-



ent to us in the case of organic nature. Here it is unmistakable that we, without justification in a rigorously critical sense, are acting in terms of a commitment to the presupposition that such forms of motion-patterns exist in nature. We must make this commitment, and are happy with such "purposiveness," even if it be obtained at the price of a bad conscience on the part of our critical rationality. Kant teaches us merely that our bad rational conscience properly would have to extend not only to the realm of organic nature, but that such double-mindedness runs through *all* the sciences in so far as they treat of particular types of objects. According to him, the power of teleological judgment is "*not a particular faculty, but rather the power of reflective judgment in general.*" (CJ, LII) Judgment is reflective if it proceeds from a particular object (or realm of objects, for example, material bodies) to a general concept of this object. This procedure must be distinguished from determinative judgment, which proceeds from the concept of a possible object of experience *in general*, under which it *subsumes*, and thus constitutes and determines its object. Reflective or teleological judgment, since it proceeds from the particular, can make no appeal to a "principle derived from the *concept* (emphasis by author) of nature as object of experience in general in order to affirm an *a priori* relationship to purpose . . ." Hence, "many particular experiences must be employed . . . in order that an objective purposiveness can be recognized in a merely empirical fashion in the case of a particular object." (*ibid.*) This "objective purposiveness" is defined as "the agreement of its form with the possibility of the thing itself, according to a concept of it which preceeds it and contains the ground of this form." (CJ, XLVIII)

In the foregoing philosophical analysis, as in the thought of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, organic nature, the status of which commonly provokes controversies among conflicting world-views in regard to teleology, is only an example. (Compare CJ, LII: "... for example, an organized body"). What is at stake here is a far more fundamental problem: that is, whether it is true that, on the one hand, from a *concept of possible experience in general*, no teleological consideration of nature can be justified, while, on the other hand, it is always the case that we *nolens volens* produce teleological judgments when we are dealing with *actual* experiences. For *actual* experience always approaches nature with *specific* concepts such as "material bodies," or, more specifically, "organic bodies," etc. And such experience *pre-supposes* an agreement between many particular instances and that pattern which lies analytically in the definition of such "separate although of themselves empirical concepts" (MFNS, Preface). This presupposition, since it can in no way be derived from the *concept* of possible experience, is fulfillable only in a "contingent fashion." The dilemma of causal determination *vis à vis* teleolo-

gical reflection is the dilemma of the transcendental *concept* of experience, and the starting points of the individual sciences. From the perspective of the transcendental concept of experience, these starting points are essentially *historical*, because they have no *conceptual* justification.

### III

The relationship between causal determination and teleological reflection appears in the philosophical tradition which has concerned itself with this issue as a distinction between *form* and *content*. We could also describe it as the relationship between syntax and semantics. It is hence, viewed from this perspective, senseless to oppose one to the other. Causal determination and teleological reflection imply each other. Thus, we cannot say that, for Kant, causal determination plays, in an absolute sense, a greater role than teleological reflection. It is only the case, according to him, that a concept of the objective validity of the former is possible, because it is concerned only with a *form*, and not with a specific *content*. Contents are *eo ipso specifically* differentiated from each other, and thus, as determinate contents, cannot play a role if the issue under consideration is the constitution of the object *in general* (the "transcendental object").<sup>1</sup>

The teleological principle means, to be sure, nothing other than the specificity of *any* content — that is, its transcendental contingency. It signifies that each content is determined "from its own internal structure" — that is, its transcendental contingency, *not* from the perspective of the transcendental subject or, which is the same thing, *not* from the perspective of the condition of the possibility of an object, as such. "From its own internal structure" has here at first simply this *negative* significance. If one only can understand that which one can construct, as Kant once tersely put it (letter to Beck, Jan. 7, 1784) — and objectivity as such belongs here, for the sake of a concept of objectivity; we "make" our ideas objective according to rules — then the specific *contents* do not belong to that which we are able to construct, and thus do not belong to that which has an objective significance, of which we are able to construct a concept. For example, according to Kant, we cannot make a blade of grass. A more general example, thoroughly Kantian in nature, would be the commonplace observation that we are unable to "construct" *matter*, that is, that which is the "highest" [in the hierarchy] of concepts

<sup>1</sup> That there also arises in Kant's thought the problem of a choice among the different transcendental forms can, in this context only be noted. Refer to "Freiheit und Urteil bei Kant," *Akten des 4. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1974), II. 1. 141-57.

opposed to "thinking being." It is what it is (essentially) "*from its own internal structure*" — that is, *not* from our cognitive capacity. Put otherwise, we reflect in respect to it as we do in respect to the blade of grass — teleologically. The only difference is that, in the case of the blade of grass, we apply *further* specifications, which nevertheless have the same negative principle: we cannot deduce these in an *a priori* fashion from the principles which are the conditions of the possibility of our knowledge. We accept these empirical specifications, however, as a linguistically presupposed schema of classification. To this extent, they are *contingent* in relation to a principle of objectivity possible for us and *not* covered by this principle. That we cannot "make" matter can also be expressed in this way: we have no *rule* according to which matter itself could be conceived of in reference to *something else*, that is, as causally *produced*. The causal principle is not applicable to matter: it can only be employed with the *presupposition* of the conservation of matter (the thesis of the conservation of energy and mass). It is thus, as Kant puts it, causality of a *particular kind*. The ("in itself empirical") concept of matter is presupposed *in physics* as the concept of something *absolutely* perduring, absolutely purposive, as unaffected by external influence. This is supposed to signify that it can be categorized, not in itself but only in its various conditions, as an effect from causes. Thus there results, precisely with Kant, a conditioned nature of the law of causality that is in agreement with modern physical theories. With regard to matter, it is in physics meaningless to speak of "motion coming from an external mover." (Compare W. Büchel's article "Materie," in the *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*,<sup>v</sup> II, p. 886). The principle of causality is indeed absolute, in so far as it is tied in an *a priori* fashion to a critical concept of experience in general. But just this concept itself is, from the perspective of the *content* of a causal determination, dependent upon the presupposition of *something determinate*, to which the law of causality *cannot be applied*, for the sake of a *concept* of such determinate contents (that is, of the scientific *a priori* of specific areas of experience or science). "Scientific rationality" has its "limit" in these necessary presuppositions which constitute its *spheres of valid inquiry* (Büchel, op. cit., p. 884).

The concept "purpose" is a negative one with regard to our grasping of the possible objectivity of concepts. Standing as a negative principle foreclosing this possibility, it is thus the schema of concepts which are *not validated by us* as holding good objectively. It is the schema of all concepts in relation to which we are not able to answer the question as to our right to *presuppose* their objective validity: that is, to employ them *as* objectively valid concepts for the determination of objects of our experience. Since we are *forced* to such a



“naive” application of these content-bearing concepts in all determinations of objects of our experience (for, to be sure, they are of necessity *more determinately* qualified than simply being objects *in general*), we *must* also say that such concepts receive their determinateness from an object which *is thus* determined, that is, that such an object has its own (“preconceptual”) determinateness and that it perdures in this determinateness which we presuppose in it. And we are not merely *compelled* to say this in regard to objects which are specified as “living.” Rather, this is also the case in regard to objects in so far as they are specified as belonging to a specific viewpoint (for example, one of the empirical sciences), as opposed to the concept of an object “in general.” We do not say this of living objects because we specify them *as living*, and view them directly under the *presupposition* “living being,” but *in so far as we regard them as specified at all*. (This, for example, is a presupposition of biological observation.) Even an object specified as “material” — hence, the objects studied by physics — is presupposed to be one which *of itself* is perduring. The “laws of conservation” express this in an axiomatic fashion. We make this presupposition whether we are expressly speaking of “purposiveness” or not. For this concept means in philosophical reflection nothing else than the fact that something “from its own internal structure” *remains what it was presupposed to be* — that is, not because of our (transcendental) faculties of knowledge. It is presupposed that it remains *as* that which, viewed in a specific way (for example, from the perspective of one of the empirical sciences), it *had been presupposed* to be from the beginning, or from the special origins of this particular science. It is constituted as objective not on *transcendental* but rather on *specific* grounds. Transcendental justification is, in relation to (particular) contents, impossible. It is presupposed as objective in relation to a particular mode of treatment, a life-form or the “basic principles” of a particular science (which are to be understood only as relating to a *particular* life-form).

Still, one might prefer to speak of “purposiveness” only when referring to organisms. But *their* “purposiveness” is only a *conditioned* one. Not only is the individual unable to maintain itself *from itself* in its species-determination, and hence dies, but even entire species do not survive the process of “natural selection.” Aristotle still thought that one could presuppose species to be self-maintaining. Thus, he was able to assign real being to them as “*infima species*.” However, from *the perspective of the present state of science*, that is, from our historically-conditioned situation, the presupposition of the identity of *matter* is surely the better example of that which, as we have shown, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas actually had in mind. The example of matter is not first in Kant, but already in Aristotle and Thomas the authentically philosophical (that is, thoroughly

general) example of the fact that *unlimited* generalization, which goes as far as dissolving the basis of various natures in the idea of *one* nature, is impossible. For this would mean that the *determinateness of the contents* as such — that is, as *different from* other contents — would be entirely lost. An equally valid philosophical example of a *specific* mode of “causality” would be, in reference to Kant, the *counter-concept* to that of matter which is “thinking being,” or however one wants to describe it. Its *meaning*, as opposed to that of matter, consists specifically in the fact that its content is *not* supposed to maintain itself as that which it had originally been presupposed to be. Its “essence” is supposed precisely to consist in, and to maintain, the following structure: it is self-determinative *vis à vis* concepts originating externally, and thus can act *freely*. But even this is a particular determination of essence from which we *proceed*, and which we presuppose as *perduring* when we speak of such a being in *opposition* to material things. “Free being” is, just as much as “matter,” such a conceptual *presupposition* prior to possible experience and not an object *in* possible experience. The *empirically conceptual opposition* between “free” and “material” beings, an opposition which thus cannot be rationally founded, underlies all of our experience as a specification of its *contents*. And only from one side, that of matter, is it presupposed that it is something which is experienced as *self-maintaining*. The other side of the opposition is presupposed to be something self-altering — thus, something that acts. It is, in *opposition* to matter, subject.

Philosophical reflection thus arrives at the conclusion that the content of possible experience, which is determined as being *over and against* the concept of thinking (and acting) being, must be presupposed as *self-maintaining*. While we say that thinking being *acts* “for a purpose,” we must say that material being *has* its “purposiveness” from the perspective of the *maintenance* of the identity in which it is thought of as determined (under laws). The concept of purposiveness is meaningful not simply in regard to conscious, acting being. It is conceived precisely in opposition to the concept of action. The principle which underlies it differs from the principle underlying action of free (unpredictable) self-determination. If we call the principle of action “our intelligence,” then the principle in question here differs from “our intelligence.” It is only *negatively* determined over against “our intelligence,” that is, the principle of purposeful activity. We can therefore call it “an intelligence which differs from our own,” if we desire to stay within the conceptual genus “intelligence.” However, since this concept can only be thought *negatively* — in opposition to the concept of “our intelligence” — the genus “intelligence” can be entirely abandoned. (Refer to Kant’s “purposiveness according to form” or “purposiveness without purpose,” CJ, p. 34, among

others.) It could with equal validity be termed the "principle of matter" — that is, a determination independent of our power. This principle is formulated in the foundational laws of the conservation of mass and energy. An older formulation would be that nature makes no leaps. One could also say that nature is presupposed as *law-abiding*, or as reliable, as *objectively* structured. These would simply be other formulations of the thought of its purposiveness.

Causality, on the contrary, is a structure of our intelligence and is employed in *understanding* nature. A formal relationship "if A, then B" is essentially a *proposition* which we (hypothetically) presuppose in order that, through its use, we will be able to "explain" appearance 'B'. We are able, *if* we can employ a *rule* of this sort — apart from needing to justify this also — to project in this fashion the *logical* necessity of a deductive *inference* (first premise: If A, then B; second premise: A; Conclusion: B) into our experience, and thereby to constitute that experience as "objective" or necessary. This strategy succeeds if we are not forced to justify the rule "if A, then B" itself — that is, if the rule is not contested at least for the moment. This general (*a priori*) procedure of constituting our experience as objective produces a general *concept* of experience, and thus of experiential objects *in general*. But such an experience *presupposes*, however, the objectivity of the concept of matter — that is, the rule-ordered structure of nature according to a *particular* (empirical) conceptual schema (the purposiveness of nature for our intelligence). Still, we are in no way able to validate the objectivity of *this* presupposition.

The presupposition of the rule-orderedness of nature under a particular concept — that is, under a *specific kind* of causality (as opposed to freedom) — is a fact identical to that of the purposiveness of nature. It is the presupposition that something in *its very* nature "rebels" against the fact that we can so conceive it, as "our intelligence" *takes it*, as purposive from the perspective of its *own posited* (conditioned) goals. We are positing a principle of nature which is *opposed* to the purposive thinking of our own intelligence, if the concept of *objective* knowledge is to have meaning at all. We are positing the *negation* of the absolute passivity of nature *vis à vis* external — for example, *our* — goals. And, it is simply a matter of expression if we now want to call this principle — which we are positing as "beyond" our intelligence — an "intelligence" which differs from our own. Whatever we choose to call it, we *mean* something that sets limits to our cognitive capacity and prevents us from attempting to determine nature from our conditioned viewpoint *alone*. We mean the "nature of the thing" toward which our intelligence has to comport itself in an intelligent fashion. We mean a nature that opposes our intelligent understanding of it with its *own* principles



which constitute its intrinsic identity, or which give it a *form* which differs from our idea of it. This concept of nature stands as *content* to the form of our consideration of it. If the goal of our intelligence is knowledge, then the fact that in the very purposiveness of this cognitional activity nature is presupposed to be *self-determined* requires purposive consideration of nature itself. This consideration must be added to the "reflection upon a rule" whereby we are alone enabled to make our experience "objective" in such a way that a transcendental-logical *concept* of objectivity in general is possible. But reflective consideration is only meaningful in reference to a state of affairs which is in itself purposive. Thus, one cannot separate the concept of nature's purposiveness from that of our knowledge of nature. If we are to speak meaningfully about knowledge of nature, we must presuppose an *absolute purposiveness* in nature, whatever the empirical concepts might be whereby we do this.

This purposiveness must be absolute, because otherwise our knowledge would only be relative. As was said, a *living* object is only *conditionally purposive*. It can be killed, and it disintegrates with death. Even species perish. In regard to such objects, the causal influence of external things can be observed objectively to destroy the internal structure which they are at first perceived to have. There remains, then, in regard to these things, only the objectivity of the causal process which terminates their "intrinsic nature." There would remain *only* the objectivity of such processes as would go beyond the specific species-forms, that is, of the tendency toward a universal *leveling*, and hence toward the perishing of every knowledge-object determined with respect to content. This would be true if *nothing* opposed this leveling, that is, if nothing determinate remained presupposed on the grounds of an *absolute* purposiveness. For a full concept of knowledge, we must presuppose that there are objects having an *objective form*, which cannot be dissolved by an external influence. This is the case with the concept of matter, in so far as in it something determinate is thought which cannot be overturned by the influence of something determined differently, and which is subject to no process which can be explained causally: matter, which by definition cannot be dissolved by thought. One cannot *think* that it does not maintain its posited identity. The term "matter" is understood semantically (conceptually) in this way. Thinking *must* proceed in such a way that it does not think away the content of <all of> the concepts which it employs. No rule can be posited whereby reflection can offer an *explanation* of the destruction of matter (or energy). Causal explanation must have its limits so long as it is supposed to be understood as knowledge. Moreover, in other sciences, because of the determinateness of their fields of inquiry, there must be analogous concepts to absolute purposiveness of an objective kind. We can desig-

nate them by analogy to the concept of matter in physics, as the "matter" of *differently* (for example, further) specified frames of reference. (To speak of matter in an absolutely "materialistic" sense, incidentally, must, from what we have shown, appear problematical.)

The distinction between the above-described viewpoint and the pre-critical tradition is simply that physics no longer presupposes many "*species*," but rather the "*species*" matter is presupposed as absolute purposiveness. The common feature shared by the two consists in this: we presuppose a purposiveness of nature *in the same sense* as in the tradition one presupposed a purposiveness in the plurality of species. We do this because otherwise we could not talk meaningfully about knowledge. Even if linguistically the *term* "purposiveness" is by preference used only in connection with the species of organic nature, the thoughts and arguments, that is, the philosophical *concept* underlying it is the same indispensable concept.

#### IV

To speak of teleological "judgment" suggests that teleological reflection is of the same formal structure as causal determination. Thus, it could not relate to the latter as content to form. "For the sake of" or "in order to" would be formal conjunctions as well as "because" or "if-then." The fundamental difference between the two, however, is to be found in the fact that, in the hypothetical judgment-form "if . . . then," the sentences are so conjoined that the *truth-value* of one is dependent upon that of the other. This constitutes their formal relationship. In the sentence "Spiders build webs *in order to* catch flies," this is not the case: "in order to" has here a *content-filled* semantic function. It refers to a closer explication of the content of the predicate of the sentence "Spiders build webs." "Building" is interpreted as a *conditioned* purposive occurrence, or as a "means" to be *distinguished* from its "goal." A meaning is *accorded* to "building" in relationship to the life of the spider — that is, to the survival of this species, even if this activity might very well lead to the discovery of the spider by a house-cleaner, and thus to the spider's death. Hence, generally speaking, certain *specialized actions* can, under *changed conditions*, be shown to be quite un purposive for entire species. (The viewpoint of a scientific investigation under the *presupposition* of such conditioned purposiveness can in principle pass over into a more comprehensive viewpoint: for example, the biological into the chemical or into the viewpoint of physics. Correspondingly, the "matter" of the former sciences gives way to the "matter" of the more comprehensive viewpoint.) Generally speaking, "in order to" and "for the sake of" appear in our linguistic usage principally as phrases to express *conditioned* purposiveness (the

means-end relationship). In any case, they too are employed in the expression of goal-oriented *activity* (he took the medicine in order to become well) the proven *effectiveness* of which precisely cannot be affirmed. Indeed, it is possible to choose unsuitable means. The above-mentioned conjectures simply express the assertion that something is *viewed* or *chosen* as a *means* in relation to something else as a *goal*, not, however, that it is purposive in an unconditioned way. A conditioned natural purposiveness is always regarded in *analogy* to conditioned purposive human *activity*, even if the organization of life is "strictly speaking" not at all "analogous to any form of causality of which we know" — neither to the mechanistic causality from the exclusive claim of which it is precisely to be distinguished, nor to the *causality of freedom*. And yet, we must *presuppose* "for the purpose of making the faculty of human judgment intelligible" such a (to us unknown) kind of causality in analogy to the one known by us. (Kant, CJ, §§61, 65) Hence, the philosophical question of an objective purposiveness cannot be discussed on the basis of examples of *this kind*, since indeed there is nothing to prevent one from considering something which is objectively unpurposive as a means for attaining a certain goal which, as *determinate* (that is, as a posited goal) is itself only a means in relationship to an absolute goal. It is itself *posited* only in relation to another goal which *differs* from it. (Compare Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*,<sup>2</sup> II, pp. 404-06; or *Science of Logic*, II, 393-94.) This is true in general for the structure of *posited* goals — that is, for the structure of the (subjective) purposive activity of "conscious beings," which essentially can only be *conditionally* purposive. It is true for *objective* purposiveness in so far as it is regarded *by analogy* to this purposive activity — hence "anthropomorphically" — *as* subjective. Thus, these structures of purposiveness which are *presupposed to be* objective within the context of the purposive activity of knowing, from which the single sciences take their point of departure as from a certain "kind" of matter, can themselves always at some time or other prove to be unpurposive presuppositions. Philosophical reflection, regarding objective purposiveness, on the contrary, always aimed at an ontological<sup>2</sup> relationship which was supposed to mean the *self-being* of something. Thus, an "absolute" intelligence was presupposed in relationship to presup-

<sup>2</sup> But Kant applies the concept "ontological predicate" only to the pure concepts of the Understanding (CJ, XXIX). "Ontology" thus means the transcendental, general ontology as a theory of object *qua* object, or of 'nature in general' (CJ, XXX), while concepts such as "material," "animate," etc., could validly serve as predicates of "regional ontologies." Yet, this can be the case only in the sense that these predicates of "regional ontologies" do not fall "under" the categories of "transcendental logic" as their "further specification," but rather are *presupposed* as possible *contents* in such a way that the categories of transcendental logic first attain a *meaning* in relationship to such concepts of regional ontology. The concept of the ontological thereby gets its meaning from the conceptual and therefore, in the final analysis, linguistic frame of reference of scientific or non-scientific "views."



positions such as "substantial forms," or "natures," in expressed *distinction* to *our* intelligence which, even in its presuppositions of purposiveness, can, in individual instances, be goal-oriented in an unpurposive way. Moreover, even *if* our intelligence is goal-oriented purposively, it can be so only in a *conditioned* form. In the idea of an absolute intelligence, on the contrary, the difference between end and means is fundamentally overcome. In relationship to it, we cannot say which means are "chosen" to which goal, but only that, in the interest of *a concept of objective knowledge in general*, the *fact* of the purposiveness of nature in general (purposiveness without, so far as we can see, purpose) is presupposed. The objective correlate to such purposiveness would then be the *final* matter.

To be sure, we cannot say "through which means" this matter is preserved, or is so constructed, that it can "maintain itself." All *special* purposiveness can be shown to be, at some time, unpurposiveness and consequently, can dissolve. The principle of causal determination can pass beyond the specific purposive "forms." However, the *presupposition* of the objective relevance of specific, that is, contentful concepts in general is indispensable if there is to be a possible application of causal determination. Therefore, our intelligence must necessarily presuppose, for the sake of its concept of knowledge, a purposiveness which passes beyond the nexus of purposive relationships which can be recognized and therefore (contingently) stated by our intelligence as purposive. Here, once again, Kant's insight into the essentially unfathomable nature of this necessary presupposition is confirmed. And it is confirmed that the philosophical concept of the purposiveness of nature, in its exemplifications of the difference of conditioned and absolute purposiveness is itself conditioned (by the history of science, etc.). And yet, the concept of absolute purposiveness itself, as understood in the thought of Aristotle, Thomas, or Kant, is indispensable.

#### TRANSLATION NOTES

<sup>i</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947).

<sup>ii</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1974).

<sup>iii</sup> ———, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1974).

<sup>iv</sup> ———, *Metaphysical Foundation of Natural Science*, trans. James Ellington (1970). (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

<sup>v</sup> W. Büchel, "Materie," in *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. by Hermann Krings, Hans Michael Baumgartner, and Christopher Wild (Munich: Kösel, 1973), III, 877-887.

<sup>vi</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. by Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1948; or *Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnson and L. G. Struthers (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1951).

## ARE THERE EXPLANATIONS OF THEORIES?\*

E. Scheibe

Translated by Joseph A. Novak

A piece written by Popper in 1957, "The Aims of Science," serves as the point of departure for the following considerations.<sup>1</sup> As far as I know it is the earliest essay in which a certain type of explanation of theories is hinted at. My own exposition will follow along the same lines, with some modifications. Since Popper's article seems to be little known, my first task will be to present the main features of its argument.

Right at the start Popper poses the question as to what is the *aim of science*, and he replies to the effect that, in his opinion, "the aim of science is to find *satisfactory explanations* of whatever strikes us as being in need of an explanation." Immediately following this reply, Popper clarifies what he wants to be understood by a 'satisfactory explanation.' It turns out that he understands it to be more or less what is today well-known as the so-called Hempel-Oppenheim model of an explanation or — as I will call it following Hempel's practice — the deductive-nomological (abbreviated as: D-N-) *model of explanation*.<sup>2</sup> Popper presents the following points, albeit in a

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\* Translated from "Gibt es Erklärungen von Theorien?", in, *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 1 (1976), pp. 26-45.

The title-question is asked against the background of the orthodox understanding that explanations of contingent facts are frequently given in the empirical sciences. The question is then whether it is not the case that laws and theories are also explained, at least where highly theoretical sciences such as physics are under consideration. The article gives no definitive answer to the question. It is concerned only to suggest that, if this should be the case, the concept of the deductive-nomological explanation as we know it does not suffice for this purpose and must be replaced by a concept of explanation which takes account of the approximative relations between theories.

<sup>1</sup> K. R. Popper, "Über die Zielsetzung der Erfahrungswissenschaft," *Ratio* 1 (1957), pp. 21-31; the article also appears in the English version of *Ratio* 1 (1958), pp. 24-35 under the title "The Aim of Science."

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Hempel and P. Oppenheim, "Studies in the Logic of Explanation," *Philosophy of Science* 15 (1948), pp. 135-75. C. G. Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 331-496.

somewhat different order than I do now:

- 1) An explanation is a class of sentences, one of which (the *explicandum*) is explained by the others, which together are designated as the *explicans*.<sup>3</sup>
- 2) The explicandum is a *logical consequent* of the explicans.
- 3) The explicans contains sentences which *rank as laws of nature*.
- 4) The explicandum is generally *known to be true*.
- 5) The explicans *is true*, even if generally it is not known to be such; in no case however may it be known to be false.
- 6) The truth of the explicans is *testable independently* of the explicandum.

This is Popper's presentation and it is precisely conditions of more or less this type which today have already found their way, frequently in a standardized form, into the textbooks of philosophy of science as an exposition of the concept of scientific explanation.<sup>4</sup> It is especially conditions 2) and 3) that have led to talk of 'deductive-nomological' explanations.

In addition to what Popper explicitly introduces as constitutive of an explanation, he naturally also intends much else that remains unexpressed. Here we can include the idea that the explicandum of an explanation — as distinct from what is explicitly required of part of the explicans — is indeed *not* a law of nature but a proposition which describes a completely *contingent* state of affairs. That Popper *in the first instance* intends things in this way is clear from an idea which, although initially interwoven with his elaborations on the concept of explanation, subsequently gets freed from these and becomes the dominant theme in his later expositions. The idea is that an explanation will prove to be more satisfactory the more testable is its explicans and especially the law of nature contained therein. Further, a greater testability is obtained as science rises to *theories* — Popper will so express himself more frequently from this point onwards — of ever richer content, of an ever higher degree of universality and precision. Finally, in conjunction with this advancement, explanations are no longer explanations *by means* of laws, but become explanations *of them*; thus, laws constitute whatever it is that is to be explained. For Popper this path of science results in part from the fact that, if the aim of science is to explain, it will also be its aim "to explain what so far [that is, up to this point in his exposition] has

<sup>3</sup> Popper employs 'explicandum' or 'explicans' in place of the more usual 'explanandum' or 'explanans.' As long as I am considering Popper's article, I will follow this usage.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, W. Stegmüller, *Wissenschaftliche Erklärung und Begründung* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1969). See also its bibliography.



been taken to be an explicans, such as a law of nature. Thus, the task of empirical science constantly renews itself. We may go on forever, proceeding to explanations of a higher and higher level of universality . . . ."<sup>5</sup>

We now finally reach the point — as indicated — where it becomes quite clear that it is not in the later part of his writings, as will be shown, but rather in his initial formulation (if it can be called such) of the notion of explanation that Popper is thinking exclusively of explanations the explicandum of which is a proposition that describes a contingent state of affairs. This agrees, on the whole, with the customary notion that D-N-explanations explain contingent states of affairs. Consequently, in the usual discussions of the matter, at least a glimmer of the notion shines through that precisely this *difference*, namely, between the explicans containing a law and the absolutely contingent explicandum, belongs to what constitutes an explanation *as such*. I am thinking above all about the frequently found exemplifications by means of which an author makes clear the necessary occurrence of a law in an explanation by showing a deductive connection in which not only the conclusion but also all of the premises are contingent and then says that these *are not* explanations. Popper thus finds himself in complete agreement with the orthodox opinion, in that he understands the notion of explanation from which he proceeds in his work as involving a contingent explicandum. However, insofar as he then, as noted, describes the path of science (precisely as explanatory science) as a path to ever deeper laws and explanations, he violates, for the first time, the notion of explanation laid down at the start. I wish to show now, while keeping Popper's article in view, that this is not the last time he does so. On the contrary, in the elaboration of his basic thought, Popper sees himself forced to a notion of explanation which violates not only a tacit supposition, but also two of his aforementioned *explicitly* posited adequacy conditions for a notion of explanation. One should also note that all of this happens without his indicating this situation even once, that is, without stating explicitly that he is henceforth saddled with a concept which at decisive points contradicts the one from which he started out.

I will omit a passage which for my purposes (if not for Popper's) is insignificant, namely, one in which he rejects ultimate explanations which complete his rational hierarchy. I will pick up his remarks again at that point where he goes on to say more about the deepening of theories and explanations — about precisely that step whereby a heretofore unexplained theory is explained by a new and better theory.

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<sup>5</sup> Popper, "Über die Zielsetzung der Erfahrungswissenschaft," p. 23; English version, p. 26 [brackets added by author].

Popper is not convinced of a complete logical analysis of such an increase in depth, but he claims nevertheless to have found a sufficient condition for it. He illustrates this condition in the context of the transition from Galilei's law of free fall and Kepler's laws of planetary motion to Newton's gravitational theory. Contradicting the assertion (of anonymous origin) that the latter theory can be deduced from the former laws or even be their conjunction, he puts forward the contrary claim that the Newtonian theory stands *in contradiction* to both its predecessors: these, therefore, must be *false* if we assume (*unterstellen*) the truth of the Newtonian theory. Moreover, he further asserts that Newton's theory *also explains* its two predecessors. Popper describes what this explanation looks like in the following way: "Newton's theory unifies Galilei's and Kepler's. But far from being a mere conjunction of both these theories — which play the part of explicanda for Newton's theory — *it corrects them while explaining them*. The original explanatory task was the deduction of the two older theories. It is completed not by deducing them but by deducing something better in their place: new results which, under the special conditions of the older theories, come numerically very close to these older results and at the same time correct them. Thus the empirical success of the old theory may be said to corroborate the new theory; in addition the corrections may be tested in turn — and perhaps refuted or corroborated. What is brought out strongly by the logical situation which I have sketched is the fact that the new theory cannot possibly be *ad hoc* or circular. Far from repeating its *explicandum* the new theory contradicts it, and corrects it."<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious — although Popper, as noted, does not expressly raise it — that the concept of explanation which is sketched by him here through an example is quite irreconcilable with the notion of deductive-nomological explanation. While it is characteristic of, even essential to, the latter that the explicandum *follow logically* from the explicans, we now hear that these are *contradictory*. While it is a further characteristic of a D-N-explanation, at least usually, that its explicandum is *recognized as true*, we are now told that it is, in most cases, *false*. This is because we are told that new results can be deduced from the explanatory theory which correct the theory to be explained and at the same time confirm the new explanatory theory. Less euphemistically phrased this simply means that these new results are the results of observations which falsify the old theory (the explicandum) even if they perhaps do so only narrowly. We thus find ourselves confronted here not only with *another* notion of explanation but with one which is *inconsistent* with the concept of D-N-explanation; one which, moreover, is introduced into a context in

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 29ff; English version, p. 33 [amended by translator].

which the consideration is no longer about the explanation of contingent states of affairs as in D-N-explanations, but about the explanation of law-like theories. The question yet to be treated is: what is to be thought both of this concept of explanation itself, as well as of the context within which Popper introduces it. This is precisely the question which, at the same time, is an initial specification of my opening question: "Are there explanations of theories?"

The metascientific (*wissenschaftstheoretischen*) context within which, following Popper, I would like to situate the concept of the explanation of theories is a context which has special relevance today. It deals with the problem whether a demarcationism — restricted, if need be, to the natural sciences but conceivably more universal — can be made dominant. By 'demarcationism' I understand a scientific position which believes in the possibility of the formation of a demarcation criterion, that is, a criterion which is capable of distinguishing in an objective and universal fashion between what is science and what is not. Speaking more precisely one can say it distinguishes between good and bad science, or as one commonly says, between science and pseudoscience. It is an old dream of philosophers to develop criteria for doing good science, but it has acquired a peculiar relevance in our century. Aroused by the significant successes of the natural sciences — especially of physics — which have characterized the first half of our century, the philosophy of science, resting on the contemporary upswing in logic, has made considerable effort to solve the demarcation problem. It is known that Popper was a dominating figure in this effort. On the other hand, this enterprise has had to confront internal difficulties from the start. The controversy between Popper and Carnap or — to speak of 'isms' — between falsificationism and inductivism is a notable example.<sup>7</sup> In addition, an external struggle soon allied itself with these difficulties, as a clamor arose placing in question the whole demarcationist program, even when restricted to the natural sciences. We can mention here, first and foremost, the emergence of T. Kuhn and Feyerabend who more or less tried to put down as hopeless a self-contained logical solution to the demarcation problem.<sup>8</sup>

In order to give a better description of the situation, I would like

<sup>7</sup> Compare P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1963); and his *The Philosophy of Karl Popper* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1974), pp. 62ff. and 976ff.

<sup>8</sup> T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970); P. Feyerabend, "Against Method," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. IV. Edited by M. Radner and S. Winokur (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp. 17-130; by the same author, "Consolations for the Specialist," *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Edited by I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 197-230; and his "Die Wissenschaftstheorie — eine bisher unbekannte Form des Irrsinns?", in, *Natur und Geschichte*, ed. by K. Hübner and A. Menne (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1973), pp. 88-124.



to recall that recently at least a certain direction within demarcationism, which I myself am inclined to follow, has acknowledged an *historical dimension*. This direction is traceable to Popper, and it was, for a time, defended by Feyerabend as a so-called theoretical pluralism; it most recently emerged in Lakatos in the form of the so-called "Methodology of scientific research programs."<sup>9</sup> The basic idea is that the scientific nature of a human enterprise is not immediately apparent but becomes obvious — if at all — only after a time and then as *progress*. Thus, the unit of appraisal of a criterion of demarcation is no longer — as previously viewed — a single theory proposed at a certain time, but rather a temporal succession of theories or even of different versions of the basic thought pertaining to one and the same theory. Accordingly, the criterion of demarcation has to specify characteristic conditions so that with such a development progress is achieved. Beyond that Lakatos was the first seriously to consider that historical change is to be noted and is unavoidable not only in science but also on the level of methodology, that is, exactly where the criteria of demarcation are formulated. In order to render demarcationism successful he had thus to seek out criteria of rationality even for the development on a methodological plane. Understandably, he tried to resolve this problem in such a way that the solution made his methodology of research programs superior to the late version of Popper's falsificationism, its predecessor.<sup>10</sup> Although these investigations are very impressive, I prefer not to pursue them further here nor to enter into Lakatos' methodology. Rather, I will take a step back and pick up some thoughts from the later period of Popper's attempts to establish a criterion of demarcation in order to connect them with some explicitness to Popper's initially proposed modification of the notion of explanation. In this way two interdependent aspects of the notion of progress — the progressive nature of scientific development on one side and its continuity on the other — should be seen *in their interdependence*, and thus as stronger than they would appear in Popper and in other authors.

Among Popper's later ideas modifying his falsificationism in which his criterion of demarcation is increasingly seen under the aspect of progress, I want to concentrate on the idea that — to speak quite loosely — progress does not take place when we simply add new knowledge to old but rather first when through new knowledge we

<sup>9</sup> K. Popper, "Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge," in his *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 215-50; P. Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism," *Beyond the Edge of Certainty*, ed. by R. G. Colodny. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), pp. 145-260; and I. Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, pp. 91-196.

<sup>10</sup> I. Lakatos, "History of Science and its Rational Reconstruction," *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. VIII, ed. by R. C. Buck and R. S. Cohen (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1971), pp. 91-136.

considerably modify (if not overturn) what we had already accepted. Thus, as a result of this view, progress is not merely cumulative but has a function of transforming accepted knowledge. Merely cumulative progress is excluded, and an additional advantage is made possible, to a certain degree, insofar as two consecutive theories  $T$  and  $T_1$  are genuinely competitive with respect to their truth and  $T_1$  even has *de facto* empirical success in a domain in which  $T$  empirically fails. Already at the outset we found Popper guided in this matter of explanation by an example in which he emphasized these characteristics. Even if it is not the case that Newton's gravitational theory absolutely contradicts Kepler's theory when rendered comparable in the appropriate way, it remains true that the two theories contradict one another when limited to one or another part of their common range of application and that in some of these parts Newton's theory holds up while Kepler's fails.<sup>11</sup>

The notion that progress is tied to contradiction and conflict can thus be shown in an initial way in this historical example. The notion loses the paradoxical appearance which it might have at first glance, if one considers that it is not a question here of the replacement of an initial fully verified statement by another that is equally true, but rather a question of the relation of successive law-like theories which, all the same, we can never definitively confirm. The profit brought from the combination of contradiction and progress perhaps becomes immediately clear, however, when a new theory, which already stands in *a priori* conflict with its predecessor, contributes to the creation of facts which one would never hit upon if one had only the notion of a cumulative expansion of the existing theories.

Still it would be incorrect, or at least insufficient, to build only on progress understood in this way. The development of physics, for example, is in no way a permanent whirlpool of mutually contradictory theories. Rather, a certain *continuity* dominates by means of empirical verification. Accordingly I here have in view, in the simplest case, pairs of theories which indeed stand in the competitive relationship mentioned earlier but in which, at the same time, the first, older, theory has been verified empirically, perhaps to a considerable degree. It is well known to what a significant degree, for instance, Newton's theory of gravitation, Newton's universal mechanics and finally the entire classical physics were verified before they were replaced by subsequent theories. One is thus forced to make certain that the empirical success of the superseded theory shows itself as

<sup>11</sup> Compare E. Scheibe, "The Approximative Explanation and the Development of Physics," *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, Vol. IV. Edited by P. Suppes et al. (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1973), pp. 931-42; and by the same author, "Die Erklärung der Keplerschen Gesetze durch Newtons Gravitationsgesetz," in, *Einheit und Vielheit. Festschrift für C. F. von Weizsäcker*, ed. by E. Scheibe and G. Sussmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 98-118.

such in the new theory. Only in this way does the genuine asymmetry come into the relationship of the two theories, namely, that on the one hand, failures of the old correspond to certain successes of the new theory, while, on the other hand, however, *the converse does not hold*. Only in this way can the old theory be overcome also in principle and can there justifiably be any talk of progress. Imagine the converse: empirical successes of theory  $T$  which are failures of  $T_1$  are juxtaposed to the empirical successes of theory  $T_1$  which are failures of  $T$ .  $T$  and  $T_1$  would thus be found to be in a deadlock, so to speak, and no one would be able to say which of the two theories represented progress over the other. Progress always requires a link with the existing situation and proof that the new does not mean a step back where the old has been verified.

This consideration of the continuity of the scientific development still needs, of course, some precautions in order to secure it against such insistent objections as were raised by Feyerabend.<sup>12</sup> Feyerabend proposes that in certain cases which, by the way, he takes from physics:

- 1) the qualified scientists do not seem to feel themselves bound to prove that all empirical successes of a theory  $T$  be found as such in a successor theory  $T_1$ ;
- 2) beyond this, certain arguments make it probable that in fact this relationship between  $T$  and  $T_1$  does not hold without exception.

Feyerabend offers in consideration of the first point, for instance, that the non-relativistic portion of the perihelion shift of Mercury has been calculated up to today not on the basis of Einsteinian gravitational theory, but exclusively with the help of the old Newtonian theory. Regarding the second point, Feyerabend recalls, for instance, the many arguments in favor of the impossibility of obtaining the classical behavior of macroscopic objects (for example, in light of the dichotomy of the existence or non-existence of properties) from quantum theory alone. Now concerning the first point I think it is understandable that the demonstrations in question are at first omitted (for instance, on account of enormous mathematical difficulties) in favor of that research which might, with a new theory, obtain new empirical results. But this forward-looking attitude is still generally linked with the belief that the connection with the old theory is basically possible. A decisive proof that, for instance, the Einsteinian theory of gravitation was not capable of reproducing the empirical successes of Newton's theory would, in my opinion, cause a

<sup>12</sup> P. Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism II," *The Nature and Function of Scientific Theories*, ed. by R. G. Colodny (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970), pp. 275-353; see especially pp. 296ff.



shock among physicists. One must, however, be careful here, especially in light of the situation in quantum mechanics. This can be done at least roughly in such a way that, to meet the second objection, one makes the proposed relationship of progress between two theories explicitly relative to an empirical domain. For instance, in the case of gravitation it is the cosmological domain; in the case of the remaining interactions it is the atomic domain.

Accordingly, I want to summarize in a somewhat formal fashion what has been said thus far about the notion of progress as follows:

In order that a theory  $T_1$  show progress over a theory  $T$  in an empirical domain  $B$ , two conditions must be fulfilled:

- $A_1$ ) For some empirical successes of  $T_1$  in  $B$  there are corresponding empirical failures of  $T$ .
- $A_2$ ) For all empirical successes of  $T$  in  $B$  there are corresponding ones of  $T_1$ .

It is to be emphasized in this that these conditions are only necessary conditions for the progress of  $T_1$  vis-à-vis  $T$  (in  $B$ ). They can be made stronger in various ways and I will later refer to this.  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  suffice, however, as minimal conditions for making clear what concerns me next — an argument to be introduced primarily only in a general way — namely, that these two conditions already provide a basis for a *relationship of explanation* between theories  $T_1$  and  $T$ . Stronger conditions will then have to be considered, if the further query arises as to what particular types of explanations here come into question.

My first reason for anticipating the possibility of explanations in connection with the conditions of progress  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  is the quite generally current opinion that explanations always come into play where we have the possibility of inquiring (with some hope of success) about a thing — heretofore accepted only in terms of *what* it is — as to *why* it is the way it is. A scientific theory which is still in the stage of acquiring status is a good example of something concerning the possible explanation of which we are not initially inquiring. It itself still has, at this stage, the active role of explaining something else by its help and thereby is itself proved useful. Still, this position is changed as soon as a new theory emerges which stands to the old in the relationship expressed through  $A_1$  and  $A_2$ . This is the first possibility of explaining the old theory *through* the new, because with the latter one has found at least the *kernel* of a possible explanation. Further reasons that the new theory will be sufficient for an explanation can be provided through a separate consideration of  $A_1$  and  $A_2$ .

As far as  $A_2$  is concerned, it implies that the old theory  $T$  is empirically verified and is therefore a worthwhile object for an explanation. Over and above the case of the explanation of single states of affairs, there is, in the case of a theory to be explained, an additional factor:

that it has been employed successfully towards the systematization of a possibly wide range of empirical facts. Such an understanding will not be rejected wholesale or even be left only to the past as soon as there are definitive indications (namely in the form of  $A_1$ ) that a decisive further development of the science can no longer be supported by it but only by a new theory. This will even less be the case to the extent that what was at one time in the past distinctive of the theory now in principle superseded, is the very same thing which, when it was new, was sought in order to establish its future status, namely, its empirical verification. The special statement of  $A_2$ , namely that at least in a certain domain the successes of  $T_1$  correspond to the successes of  $T$  gives reason to hope, in addition, that the new theory  $T_1$  will really provide an explanation. With a theoretical description of this domain one will know the conditions which make it understandable why, if they are fulfilled, theory  $T$  can be put in place of  $T_1$  and why, in a temporal perspective, it once first held the same position.<sup>13</sup>

Besides condition  $A_2$ , the condition  $A_1$ , which I now emphasize in passing, provides, in an especially characteristic way, a basis for the relevant explanatory relationship of two theories in so far as the explanandum also is of a universal or law-like nature. With respect to the explanation of singular states of affairs in daily life we are quite inclined to think in terms of their truth or falsity and to hold the truth of the explanandum as a condition *sine qua non* of an actual explanation. If anyone asks me why I have remained unmarried, I will reply that I am married. Everyone feels that this answer, to the extent that it is true, frees me, better than anything else, from the obligation to explain why I am unmarried. Someone who wants to be persistent could possibly go on to the new question: what *would* be the explanation of my being unmarried, if I *were* unmarried. The case of science is different from all these relationships well-known to us. For instance, in physics, the question of an explanation, say, of Newtonian gravitational theory is not considered as settled simply by a reference to the fact that this theory is empirically false. This is the case for two reasons. On the one hand, insofar as one would still like to present the matter in terms of truth and falsity, an allusion to the *truth* of the theory can be made with a far greater right. On the other hand, the condition that in fact even here empirical failures are to be noted creates an *additional* attraction for the explanation of the theory. Given that a superior theory (in the sense of condition  $A_1$ ) is available, one would like to understand the old theory not

<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed discussion see E. Scheibe, "Ursache und Erklärung," *Erkenntnisprobleme der Naturwissenschaften*, ed. by L. Krüger (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1970), pp. 253-75. See also his "Ein vernachlässigter Aspekt physikalischer Erklärung I," *Naturwissenschaften* 58 (1971), pp. 1-6.

only in so far as it was successful, but also to explain the *limits* of this success. In distinction from the explanation of single states of affairs, where the question is not posed at all in this way, the explanation of a law-like theory, if it did not also set the boundary between success and failure, would not be at all complete. That this boundary lies somewhere is implied precisely through the condition  $A_1$  vis-à-vis  $A_2$ : within the domain of success of theory  $T_1$  there is a transition from the successes to failures of  $T$ . It is therefore to be hoped that the boundary-limitation can be derived from theories  $T_1$  and  $T$  themselves by means of eventual help from a conceptual grasp of the relevant domain  $B$ .

After these general considerations it is time now to ask what sort of explanations we have here to deal with. On the one hand, these explanations guarantee continuity in the development of a science but, on the other, they are compatible with its progress, which appears perhaps at first glance even to be discontinuous. By this opposition I have already indicated the heart of the difficulties which the formation of a concept of explanation appropriate to the situation has to treat. Progress — in the sense of the introduction of perhaps basic innovations — is here in unavoidable conflict with its being linked back to something respecting which not merely some change but a progression has taken place and must also be justified *as such*. This tension is already found in the two given conditions  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  insofar as  $A_1$  is the progressive and  $A_2$  the conservative component, and insofar as one, after all, finds explanations primarily oriented toward  $A_2$  *even though*  $A_1$  holds true. One can immediately clarify this polarity between  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  by raising the obvious question concerning the usefulness of the concept of explanation which most recently has been a prominent theme in the discussions of conventional philosophy of science, namely, the concept of D-N-explanation.

We have already seen by way of introduction that it is this concept which, on the one hand, is systematically introduced by Popper as the sole concept of explanation, only to be left aside again more or less unnoticed and to be replaced by another concept which is poorly explicated. The following argumentation should now show that this shift, at least as a shift away from the concept of D-N-explanation, is quite unavoidable. To present this argumentation as a strict proof would naturally require premises which there is no opportunity to present here. But even the following considerations which leave the finer details in the air will perhaps have sufficient persuasive force.

As the simplest case of a D-N-explanation of theory  $T$  through theory  $T_1$ , I first take the case in which  $T$  follows logically from  $T_1$ :

$$(1) \quad T_1 \models T$$

If we assume that  $T$  and  $T_1$  have the same empirical basis, then we



follow not only the very close relationship between  $T$  and  $T_1$ , but also the spirit in which empiricism advocated the concept of D-N-explanation. That would mean, then, that in  $A_1$  an empirical success of  $T_1$  not only *corresponds* to a failure of  $T$ , as I have cautiously formulated it in anticipation of what appears below, but that a success of  $T_1$  is at the same time a failure of  $T$ . However, since according to (1) every failure of  $T$  is a failure of  $T_1$  we immediately see that (1) is inconsistent with the progress condition  $A_1$ . Now, the supply of possible D-N-explanations of  $T$  through  $T_1$  is not exhausted by (1). We can still have the case

$$(2) \quad T_1 \cup F \models T$$

where  $F$  is an additional premiss absent in (1). As can easily be shown, this weakening of the relation between  $T$  and  $T_1$  makes room for failures of  $T$  that at the same time are successes of  $T_1$ .<sup>13a</sup>

Thus, if the D-N-explanations are not already excluded automatically on logical grounds through  $A_1$ , the *experimental situation* can still effect this exclusion. In the very example Popper employed as an introductory focus two things are demonstrated. On the one hand, as can be rigorously shown, Kepler's and Newton's theories have common, physically relevant models and this permits D-N-explanations (2) of Kepler's theory through Newton's.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the astronomically relevant experiences factually based on the solar system can never constitute an additional premiss in Newton's theory which would have Kepler's theory as a consequence. Otherwise the solar system (if it can be assumed that it is a Newtonian system) would also be a model of Kepler's theory and that is impossible due to the distinctive failures of the latter theory regarding it. More important, however, than the exclusion through the experimental situation is the condition already mentioned above: that in important cases *stronger* conditions than  $A_1$  specify the progress from theory  $T$  to theory  $T_1$ , for example, that besides  $A_1$  and already prior to experience it is valid that:

$B_1$ )  $T$  and  $T_1$  are contradictory.

This relationship can be reconstructed, for example, for classical mechanics and quantum mechanics as well as for pre-relativistic and relativistic kinematics. It is therefore fundamental to two of the most important cases for which the problem of explanation is to be solved.  $B_1$  is, however, plainly incompatible with schema (2) for D-N-explanations.

What Popper had in mind in order to meet conditions  $A_1$ ,  $A_2$

<sup>13a</sup> Here the original text has been changed for the sake of greater clarity.

<sup>14</sup> See the works cited in n. 11.

and  $B_1$  is the concept of *approximative explanation*. A complete explanation of this concept cannot be given here due to the meta-theoretical apparatus needed for it. However, I will give the following, albeit grossly simplified, illustration. Instead of the two theories  $T$  and  $T_1$  imagine two curves in a plane which represent two functional dependences of two physical magnitudes. The condition for a contradiction  $B_1$  is expressed in this picture by the two curves having no point in common. Still the two curves can be so related to one another that the conflict between the two theories exemplified by them becomes practically meaningless in certain domains. This is the case if the two curves approach one another in infinity. On account of the limited accuracy always present in measuring we must exemplify the results of measurements through small but finite squares. In areas where the curves approach one another very closely the measuring squares will never be intersected by only one of the two but either by none or by both. Condition  $A_2$  is thereby satisfiable insofar as all measuring squares which are intersected by the curve belonging to Theory  $T$  also contain a piece of the curve belonging to  $T_1$ . On the other hand, there can also be measuring squares where the curves diverge; these intersect only the curve belonging to  $T_1$  and thereby condition  $A_1$  would be satisfied. Finally, in this intuitive analogy an approximative explanation of  $T$  through  $T_1$  can be found by explaining, in the sense of a D-N-explanation, only a strip (of finite width) around the curve belonging to  $T$  with the help of additional conditions which depend on an approximation parameter just as does the strip. When this parameter approaches zero, for instance, the strip around the  $T$ -curve narrows and at the same time moves away into regions in which the two curves <asymptotically> [*beliebig*] approach one another.

The conception of an approximative explanation of a theory which — as was mentioned — can be formulated in quite a universal and rigorous fashion, is compatible with the conditions  $A_1$  and  $B_1$ , and also permits the proof of  $A_2$  in concrete cases.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the Kepler-Newton case there are mathematically much simpler cases such as the explanation of the ideal gas equation through the van der Waals equation or the explanation of the radiation law of Rayleigh and Jeans through that of Planck. Still the notion of approximative explanation, as it is presented here and insofar as it can be generalized without basic difficulties is linked to a presupposition which is not satisfied, or at least not satisfied without qualification, precisely in those cases in which we are inclined to see the transition of theory  $T$  to theory  $T_1$  as a *major* or *significant* advance. The presupposition

<sup>15</sup> See the works cited in n. 11 as well as E. Scheibe, "Vergleichbarkeit, Widerspruch und Erklärung," *Philosophie und Physik*, ed. by R. Haller and J. Götschl (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1975), pp. 57-71.

is that the theoretical range of application of the older theory  $T$  can be essentially taken into the new theory  $T_1$  and, if need be, expanded through the addition of new concepts. By the theoretical range of application of a theory, I understand a choice of theoretical entities (structures) determined by the initial understanding of the basic concepts of the theory such that only *within* this range, do the laws of theory lead, in turn, to their limitation to the theoretical range of validity of the theory. The theoretical range of application, for instance, of Newtonian mechanics consists of the idea of all possible forces, masses, and spatio-temporal movements of bodies. One must first have this range before he can limit it through Newton's axioms to the theoretical range of validity of mechanics. By it is determined — and this also holds generally — with what sort of objects a theory is dealing. It becomes immediately clear that the extent to which a person can rely on a theoretical range of application common to both theories is of decisive importance for establishing an explanatory relation between them. Thus, in my preceding illustration of the notion of approximative explanation it was presupposed that the Euclidean plane is the common theoretical range of application of both theories. Only in this way could the two curves drawn on the plane be placed in that relationship which made possible the satisfaction of conditions  $A_1$ ,  $A_2$ , and  $B_1$ , as well as the approximative explanation.

As was mentioned, the presupposition in question is not satisfied in those cases in which theory  $T_1$  implies quite a considerable advance over its predecessor theory  $T$ . From the viewpoint of a physicist, especially Heisenberg has discussed this phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> For it he coined the expression 'closed theory' by which, for our purposes, is understood a theory which can no longer be improved through *small* modifications. For Heisenberg, Newtonian mechanics is the classical and historically oldest example of a closed theory of physics. He sees quantum mechanics, as one of the successor theories, as an improvement on Newtonian mechanics; he immediately adds, however, that, "it is not a question of a minor improvement, but of the radical revision of the conceptual basis. The behavior, for instance, of electrons in the atom cannot be understood with the conceptual equipment of Newtonian mechanics, but rather with the quite different conceptual apparatus of quantum mechanics."<sup>17</sup> Also in the terminology of Heisenberg it is a question — in the case of such a conceptual revision — of the change of the range of application, "which," as he

<sup>16</sup> W. Heisenberg, "Der Begriff 'abgeschlossene Theorie' in der modernen Naturwissenschaft," *Dialectica* 2 (1948), pp. 331-36. See also his "Die Richtigkeitskriterien der abgeschlossenen Theorien in der Physik," *Einheit und Vielheit*, pp. 140-44.

<sup>17</sup> See the second work cited in n. 8, p. 141.



himself says, "is essentially already determined through the concepts employed in the theory." In fact, the difference of the theoretical ranges of application or of the systems of basic concepts of classical mechanics and quantum mechanics extends so far that even the notion of a property of a physical object is affected by it.

While Heisenberg's reflections emphasize more the conclusiveness of certain parts of physics and correspondingly have the notion of a closed theory for their focus, the same issue is treated in quite a different way by T. Kuhn and by Feyerabend from the perspective of the history of science and from a perspective of the philosophy of science.<sup>18</sup> Their notion of the *incommensurability* of the two theories stands immediately for the relation between two theories which can surely be related to the same object in a sense which at first appears to be merely empirical, but which still show a more or less thoroughgoing difference in their conceptual content. I cannot examine more closely here the possible differences in the conception of the notion of incommensurability as they may exist between Kuhn and Feyerabend. Nor can I examine to what extent each of them has offered us something sufficiently exact with this concept. It is clear enough that they have before their eyes, in historical perspective, cases of greater revolutions in the development of the natural sciences. It is likewise clear enough to everyone who has ever attempted it that — considered now from a systematic point of view — the explication of Newtonian mechanics through quantum mechanics, for instance, gives rise to difficulties at precisely that point which the notion of incommensurability would indicate. Undoubtedly one has to consider in the explanation of a theory *T* through a theory *T*<sub>1</sub> that, although it is not *necessarily* to be taken as a condition of progress, still it is *occasionally* an important historically factual condition of progress that

C<sub>1</sub>) *T* and *T*<sub>1</sub> are incommensurable.

Plainly *C*<sub>1</sub> by itself cannot constitute a notion of progress. If, however, *T*<sub>1</sub> represents progress vis-à-vis *T*, for instance in the sense of conditions *A*<sub>1</sub> and *A*<sub>2</sub> while *C*<sub>1</sub> is added, then — it is clearly evident — it will be a matter of significant progress. The question is, however — and I would like to say a few words about this in closing — what is the situation with regard to the compatibility of all conditions propounded thus far, and can *C*<sub>1</sub> actually be inimical to the thought that we can and should explain successful but superseded theories — which is the idea under investigation.

Leaving aside the less interesting question — discussed elsewhere — of the compatibility of *C*<sub>1</sub> and *B*<sub>1</sub>,<sup>19</sup> I would like to note that at least

<sup>18</sup> See the works cited in n. 8.

<sup>19</sup> See the work cited in n. 15.

as regards the fundamental conditions of progress  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  the most necessary requirement in order to guard against difficulties of a possible incommensurability of the two theories  $T$  and  $T_1$  has already been anticipated. Thereby there is first of all a difference between failures or successes of Theory  $T$  on the one hand and the successes of Theory  $T_1$  on the other hand. Consequently, the by nature necessary relationship between them is grasped not as an *identity* but only as a *correspondence*. This measure permits the conditions of progress to be maintained also in the case of difference of the theoretical ranges of application or in the case of incommensurability. So it can be said in reference to  $A_1$ , for instance, that the so-called perihelion shift of a planet resulting from the Schwarzschild solution was a success of Einsteinian gravitational theory. It cannot be said, however, that *precisely this* result was a failure of the Newtonian theory, because it is represented in a non-Euclidean geometry and already on this account cannot be a constituent of the Newtonian theory. There does indeed *correspond* to it an Euclidean description of which it can be said positively that it is a failure of the Newtonian theory. What is generally required in  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  is, consequently, only the formation of a *correspondence*, broadly speaking, in the form of a representation of the empirically relevant part of the theoretical range of application of theory  $T$  in the corresponding range of  $T_1$ . The incommensurability objection of Kuhn and Feyerabend directed against the possibility of the formation of criteria of progress immanent to science can thus be met if the noted correspondences are established. To be sure, this problem has not been solved completely so far. But in light of the present proposals there is no reason to maintain *a priori* that the situation is hopeless.

The same measure promises, beyond its relevance to the problem of compatibility, some success in the formation of a concept of the retroactive explanation of a superseded theory. I readily admit that the concept of D-N-explanation drops out here, and we have seen above that this has its basis already in conditions  $A_1$  or, in any event, in  $B_1$ . Regarding the incommensurability condition  $C_1$  it can be argued further that schema (2) requires the same interpretation for  $T$  and  $T_1$  and that the incommensurability of  $T$  and  $T_1$  stands in the way of this. The same argument is likewise still valid if it is directed against approximative explanations which rest on mainly common theoretical ranges of application of  $T$  and  $T_1$ . On the other hand, Kuhn and Feyerabend concede certain states of affairs which I would emphasize much more strongly than they do. For instance, Kuhn offers some considerations which are supposed to show that Newtonian mechanics cannot be deduced from relativistic mechanics — at least not in the usual sense of the word 'deduce,' nor indeed in any even approximate sense. In the course of this consideration he

admits however: "Our [object-theoretical!] argument has, of course, *explained* [brackets and italics by author] why Newton's laws always seemed to work. In doing so it has justified, say, an automobile driver in acting as though he lived in a Newtonian universe . . ." <sup>20</sup> I would say, if one could really achieve this, he achieves all that he could reasonably hope for. In the same context of physics we hear Feyerabend saying, "It is of course true that the relativistic theme very often gives us *numbers* which are practically identical with numbers we get from classical mechanics . . ." <sup>21</sup> or again, "Now it must be admitted that both theories have certain *formulas* in common and that one can derive from Einstein's theory . . . a series of *formulas* which are identical with certain *formulas* of Newtonian mechanics." <sup>22</sup> Again, such an admission is only made in an argument which places the emphasis on the incommensurability of content of the two theories.

Now, however, it must be admitted that the mere agreement of formulas or numerical values does not yield a sufficient basis for the explanatory relationships between theories. These agreements are in relevant cases by no means accidental, but they are accompanied by *correspondences of content*. Without these being present and without knowledge of them we would neither consider the aforementioned correspondences as important nor even discover them at all. In fact, certain relativistic concepts correspond to the Newtonian concepts, which, despite their difference from the former, still can be unequivocally co-ordinated to them so that the relativistic mechanics assumes the position of succeeding the Newtonian mechanics not only as a whole but even down to detailed concepts. Should we co-ordinate the concepts incorrectly (*verkehrt*), we would not get the aforementioned agreements at all; the fact that <the latter> are only approximatively valid merely reflects the fact that corresponding concepts have different content. Still, a *correct* co-ordination completely guarantees an explanation of even the entire conceptual structure of Newtonian mechanics. Finally one can claim what Feyerabend states in passing when he says:

Besides, why should the notion of explanation be burdened by the demand for conceptual continuity? This notion has been found to be too narrow before (demand of derivability) and it had to be widened so as to include partial and statistical connections. Nothing prevents us from widening it still further to admit, say, "explanation by equivocation." <sup>23</sup>

And although I would not go so far as to appeal here to equivocation

<sup>20</sup> See Kuhn's book cited in n. 8, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> See the work of Feyerabend, cited in n. 8, p. 221.

<sup>22</sup> See the third work by Feyerabend, cited in n. 8, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> See the second work by Feyerabend, cited in n. 8, p. 227.



cations — which, by the way, is not at all necessary — I would still say that correspondences of content justified through quantitative approximations yield a sufficient basis for a future rational notion of explanation of the type sought here.

“SOCRATES EST” / “THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PEGASUS”:  
THOMAS AQUINAS AND W. VAN ORMAN QUINE  
ON THE LOGIC OF SINGULAR EXISTENCE STATEMENTS\*

Hermann Weidemann

Translated by David J. Marshall jr.

Tracing back to its origins the on-going development that has been referred to as a “rapprochement” of the philosophy of linguistic analysis with “traditional ontology,”<sup>1</sup> one comes upon the paper read by W. Van Orman Quine in September, 1939, entitled “A Logistical Approach to the Ontological Problem.” In this paper, the greater part of which was published the same year with the title “Designation and Existence,”<sup>2</sup> Quine distinguishes *singular* existence statements asserting that there does or does not exist such and such an object (for example Pegasus, the winged horse, or the disease, appendicitis) from *general* existence statements asserting that there do or do not exist objects of such and such a kind (for example, horses or prime numbers). In connection with this distinction he develops his well-known criterion for determining which “ontological commitments,” as he would say later,<sup>3</sup> a scientific theory takes on (that is, which entities it supposes to exist) by formulating its statements in a particular language.

That an entity (for example, the disease, appendicitis) exists means, according to Quine, that the singular term designating this

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<sup>1</sup> E. Tugendhat, “Die sprachanalytische Kritik der Ontologie,” in, H.-G. Gadamer (Ed.), *Das Problem der Sprache* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1967), p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> In: *The Journal of Philosophy*, no. 36 (1939). Reprinted in, H. Feigl and W. Sellars (eds.), *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Appleton, Century and Crofts, 1949), II. pp. 44-51.

<sup>3</sup> “On What There Is” (1948), in, W. V. O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 12f.

entity (in the present example, the word 'appendicitis') can be substituted for an individual variable bound by a quantifier — in other words, that the said entity is the "value" of such a variable. That something (for example, the horse, Pegasus) does not exist means that it is not one of the entities making up the range of values of a quantified variable. "To be is to be the value of a variable."<sup>4</sup> E. Tugendhat perceives in this "to be" that very "meaning of existence" which, he says, "had always been the one actually relevant to metaphysics,"<sup>5</sup> namely, the meaning that permits individual things — of which in *general* existence statements we assert some to be objects of such and such a kind — to be referred to in *singular* existence statements as existent. He reproaches, however, the traditional philosophy, of which Thomas Aquinas is one of the best known exponents, with having "regularly confused"<sup>6</sup> the two concepts of existence corresponding to these two types of existence statements. The purpose of the present article is to show that Aquinas made a noteworthy contribution toward answering the question as to the meaning of existence in singular existence statements.

## I

"In a certain respect," says Thomas in his commentary to Boethius' treatise "On the Trinity," "logic is concerned with the same object as metaphysics." The generality of both disciplines is such that neither has as its object a particular region of what is; each is concerned with being in general. "Utraque scientia communis est et circa idem subjectum quodammodo."<sup>7</sup> By the restrictive 'quodammodo' Thomas signifies that logic does indeed differ from metaphysics in the way in which it approaches being as such. As a metaphysician, the philosopher inquires into being insofar as it is proper to things; as a logician he investigates the way in which the being of things is expressed in our statements about them. "Logicus...considerat modum praedicandi; philosophus...existentiam quaerit rerum." With these words Thomas differentiates clearly, in his commentary on Book VII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*,<sup>8</sup> between *metaphysical ontology* and the *logical analysis of language*.

<sup>4</sup> "Designation and Existence," in H. Feigl and W. Sellars, *op. cit.*, p. 50; also "On What There Is," *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 487.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; also F. Inciarte, *Eindeutigkeit und Variation* (Munich: Karl Alber Verlag, 1973), pp. 233-239.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, edited by B. Decker (Leyden: Brill, 1955), q. 6, art. 1 c, p. 205, ll. 16f. Also T. Veres, "Eine fundamentale ontologische Dichotomie im Denken des Thomas von Aquin," in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, no. 77 (1970), p. 88, n. 17.



The difference that Thomas holds to exist between these two approaches to being — the linguistic or logical approach on the one hand and the metaphysical or ontological, on the other — is best understood in the light of a distinction made by Aristotle in Book V of his *Metaphysics* between two ways in which something can be said to be. The word 'is' can be used to assert the being proper to a *thing*, meaning that it is *actualized* according to one of the ten *categories*; it can also be used to express the kind of being that belongs to a sentence in the sense that what it *says is the case*, or that *the statement it makes is true*.<sup>9</sup> Thomas refers several times in his writings to this Aristotelian distinction between being as the actuality of a thing and as the truth of a statement.<sup>10</sup> Even in his early treatise "On Being and Essence" ("De ente et essentia," chap. 1) we find the sentence, "'Being' is used *per se* in two ways: either it expresses what is meant in one of the ten categories, or it signifies the truth of a statement." ("Ens per se dicitur dupliciter: uno modo quod dividitur per decem genera, alio modo quod significat propositionum veritatem.")<sup>11</sup> In his *Quaestiones Disputatae* "On Potency" ("De Potentia") he says that both 'esse' and 'ens,' while sometimes used to designate the essence of a thing or its act of existing, may also refer to the truth of a statement (q. 7, art. 2, ad 1).

But although Thomas separates the being that is expressed in our use of the word 'is' from the being that belongs to things in the world of reality, he also views language and reality as connected. The full complexity of his conception of how the two relate appears in his commentary on the second book of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, in his answer to the question whether evil exists ("an malum sit": in II *Sent.*, dist. 34, q. 1, art. 1).

Having recalled, first of all, the necessity of distinguishing with Aristotle between two modes of being — the one, categorical actualization either as a substance or as an accident, the other, the fact that is expressed as being the case in a true statement — he relates these two modes to each other as follows. Whatever can be called being according to the first mode, whatever is actualized according to one of the categories, like a human being, also has being according to the second mode, so that it can be asserted to be in an affirmative state-

<sup>8</sup> In *XII libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, edited by M.-R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1964), VII, lect. 17, no. 1658. See also G. Jüssen, "Thomas von Aquin und die Analytische Philosophie," in W. Kluxen (Ed.), *Thomas von Aquin im philosophischen Gespräch* (Munich: Karl Alber Verlag, 1975), pp. 132-164.

<sup>9</sup> *Metaphysics* Δ, 7, 1017a22-35. The word 'thing' is used here to refer not only to those entities that exist in themselves (substances) but also to their properties (or accidents) that presuppose them.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to the texts collected by Veres, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-97.

<sup>11</sup> Edited by M.-D. Roland-Gosselin (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), p. 2, ll. 9-11.

ment. But the inverse is not the case. Not everything that can be said to be in the latter sense can be said to be in the former as well. For example, an affirmative statement can be made to the effect that blindness exists ("caecitas est"); yet blindness is not something belonging to the reality of the world ("aliquid in rerum natura"), rather it is an absence of reality ("alicuius entis remotio").

Depending on whether the word 'being' ('ens') is used in the latter or the former sense, it may be either a *substantial* predicate ("praedicatum substantiale") answering the question *what* a thing is, as *what* it is actualized ("quid est"), or an *accidental* predicate ("praedicatum accidentale") answering the question *whether* a thing exists, *whether* there is such a thing ("an est"). Hence, just as a particular mode of existence — the one consisting in the fact that there is such and such a thing — corresponds to the truth of a statement, with which logic is concerned, so does a particular mode of predication correspond to the actual existence of a thing, with which metaphysics is concerned. "The way in which being is predicated depends on which of these modes is intended." ("Ens . . . secundum utrumque istorum modorum diversimode praedicatur" [*ibid.*]).

This passage implies that the difference between being, insofar as it is expressed as the *truth* of a statement and insofar as it is the *actual existence* of a thing, can be clarified only by an analysis of the way in which the word 'is' is used in a particular case. Hence if the philosopher in his capacity of metaphysician is concerned to find an objective and accurate answer to the ontological question of the existence of things in the world, he must first pose the logical question how each particular assertion of existence is to be understood. Thomas perceives the logical analysis of language as a prerequisite for the knowledge of reality, not because he takes language as a mapping or a reflection of reality, but because he is aware that language is capable of misleading us.<sup>12</sup>

In his commentary on Book V of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Thomas takes as an example the sentence 'Socrates is' to exhibit, precisely in connection with the word 'is,' the importance of distinguishing its several meanings; the sentence takes on a completely different meaning according to the sense in which the word 'is' is taken (in V *Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896).

Having indicated first of all that the actual existence of a thing — to which the word 'being' in one of its senses refers — relates as cause

<sup>12</sup> In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, for example, he criticizes Avicenna for having allowed himself to be misled by the ambiguity of the word 'is' ("deceptus est ex aequivocatione entis." In X *Metaph.*, lect. 3, no. 1982). In the *Summa Theologiae*, ed. by Institute of Medieval Studies at Ottawa (Ottawa: Garden City Press, 1941), Ia Pars, q. 48, art. 2, ad 2, he speaks of those who, unaware of the different meanings of the word 'is,' were misled by the fact that certain things are called evil, or by the statement that there is evil in the world, into thinking that evil is an actually existing thing.

to effect to the truth of a statement — referred to by the same word in its other sense — he proceeds, using again the example of blindness, to explain how the intellect comes to conceive as being in this secondary sense that which, in the primary sense, is not-being.

When it is said, for example, that blindness exists in the secondary sense, what is meant is that the sentence used to assert that something is blind is true. But the sentence used to assert the existence of blindness is not to be called true in the primary sense, for blindness has no being in reality, but is rather a privation of being. (Dicitur enim quod caecitas est secundo modo, ex eo quod vera est propositio, qua dicitur aliquid esse caecum; non tamen dicitur quod sit primo modo vera. Nam caecitas non habet aliquod esse in rebus, sed magis est privatio alicuius esse [*ibid.*].)

Later in this passage Thomas utilizes the result of his analysis of the sentence 'Blindness exists' to arrive at an understanding of the ambiguous sentence 'Socrates exists.' These are his words:

Accidit autem unicuique rei quod aliquid de ipsa vere affirmetur intellectu vel voce. Nam res non refertur ad scientiam, sed e converso. Esse vero, quod in sui natura unaquaeque res habet, est substantiale. Et ideo, cum dicitur 'Socrates est,' si ille 'est' primo modo accipiat, est de praedicato substantiali. Nam ens est superius ad unumquodque entium, sicut animal ad hominem. Si autem accipiat secundo modo, est de praedicato accidentali.

Their meaning is this: It is accidental to a thing that something true of it be expressed in thoughts or words, for the object of knowledge is not related to the knowledge, rather, the knowledge is related to the thing. However, the being that a thing has in its own nature is substantial to it. If, therefore, the 'est' in the sentence 'Socrates est' is taken in the primary sense, the predication is substantial; for just as the concept of animal is superior to that of man, so is the concept of being to any individual being. But if the word 'est' is used in the secondary sense of being, the predication is accidental.

For this use of the word 'est' as an accidental predicate, Thomas invokes, in his commentary on the *Sentences*,<sup>13</sup> the authority of Averroes, to whom he is also indebted for the choice of 'Socrates est' as an example.<sup>14</sup> The logical structure that the use of 'est' as an accidental predicate confers on this sentence is shown by the analysis of the sentence 'Blindness exists' ('Caecitas est') which uses 'est' in the same way, that is, in answer to the question whether there is such a thing ("an est").<sup>15</sup> Thomas' analysis of 'Caecitas est' also

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, ed. by R. P. Mandonnet (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929-32), II, dist. 34, q. 1, art. 1 c; III, dist. 6, q. 2, art. 2 c.

<sup>14</sup> *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, ed. by R. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1949), II, q. 2, art. 1 [3] c.

<sup>15</sup> In II *Sent.*, dist. 34, q. 1 c; also *Summa Theol.* I, q. 48, art. 2, ad 2; also *Quaestiones Disputatae*, ed. by R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1949), *Quaest. De malo*, q. 1, art. 1, ad 19.



shows how he is able to take the word 'est,' when used in this accidental sense, as a copula ("copula [verbalis]")<sup>16</sup> linking a subject to a predicate, even though sentences of this form do not appear to have a predicate at all to which a subject could be linked.

Thomas perceived clearly that the grammatical form of such sentences is a misleading appearance, that their syntactical surface structure deceptively conceals their logical or semantic depth structure. A privation, of which blindness is an example, does not exist in the sense of having an essence of which it is the actualization, but only insofar as an existing being is deprived of something — as an animal may be deprived of vision.<sup>17</sup> The connection expressed by the copula 'est' when a privation is said to be resides in the fact that the privation is attributed to some object affected by it as if it were a formal determination of that object. "...intellectus componit privationem cum subjecto sicut formam quandam" (in *II Sent.*, dist. 37, q. 1, art. 2, ad 3).

When a privation is said to exist, the abstract singular term used to designate it — for example, the term 'blindness' — is, no doubt, the subject of the sentence used to assert its existence. By reason of its logical structure, however, such a sentence does not mean that the privation designated by its grammatical subject is anything;<sup>18</sup> it means merely that something has it. Hence 'Blindness exists' means that the general concrete term 'blind,' from which the singular abstract term 'blindness' is derived, is true of some object, namely of some animal, for example of a man. "Dicimus 'Caecitas est,' quia verum est hominem caecum esse" (*De pot.*, q. 7, art. 2, ad 1).

With this analysis of the sentence 'Blindness exists,' Thomas anticipates much of the doctrine of quantificational logic on the logical structure of existence statements of this type.<sup>19</sup> The modern interpretation of the statement that blindness exists — in the sense that the sentence used to assert that something is blind is true ("vera

<sup>16</sup> In *I Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 1, art. 1, ad 1; also In *III Sent.*, dist. 6, q. 2, art. 2 c; In *V Metaph.*, lect. 9 (no. 896); *Summa Theol.* I, q. 3, art. 4, ad 2; *Quaest. Quodlib.* IX, q. 2, art. 2 [3].

<sup>17</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, ed. C. Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1961), Pars III, cap. 7: "When evil is said to exist in the world, it is not asserted to have an essence or to exist as a real thing... what is meant is rather that something is evil by reason of the evil itself; for example blindness or any privation whatever is said to exist because an animal, say, is blind by reason of blindness." ("Dicitur etiam malum esse in mundo, non quasi essentiam aliquam habeat vel res quaedam existat... sed ea ratione quia dicitur quod res aliqua mala est ipso malo, sicut caecitas et quaelibet privatio esse dicitur, quia animal caecitate est caecum.") "Evil and privation are said to exist in the sense that a thing is said to be deprived of something by reason of its privation." ("...malum et privatio dicitur ens in quantum privatione dicitur aliquid esse privatum" [ibid.].)

<sup>18</sup> *De malo*, q. 1, art. 1, ad 19: "...evil exists as blindness does. But evil is not a thing." ("...malum est, sicut et caecitas est. Non tamen malum est aliquid.")

<sup>19</sup> W. Carl, *Existenz und Prädikation*. Sprachanalytische Untersuchungen zu Existenz-Aussagen (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1974).

est propositio, qua dicitur aliquid esse caecum": in V *Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896) — takes it to mean that the propositional function 'x is blind' is fulfilled for at least one value of the variable 'x,' the range of values of which covers the class of animals. The fact that the propositional function 'x is blind' is fulfilled in this way is expressed by the so-called existential quantifier, which converts the open sentence 'x is blind' into a closed sentence by binding the free variable 'x' contained within it.

How, in view of this analysis, is the sentence 'Socrates exists' ('Socrates est') to be understood, when the 'est' is taken, not as a substantial, but as an accidental predicate (as it is in 'Blindness exists')? Just as 'Blindness exists,' being an affirmative answer to the question whether there is blindness, expresses the fact that it is true to say of some animal that it is blind, so also 'Socrates exists,' if understood as an answer to the question whether there is such a one as Socrates, asserts that it is true to say of some man that he is Socrates. Hence 'Socrates exists,' in the sense that there is such a one as he, means that the propositional function 'x is Socrates' is fulfilled for some value of the variable 'x,' more precisely, for exactly one man.

Of course the content of the propositional function 'x is Socrates' is of a kind entirely different from that of 'x is blind.' While 'blind' is predicated of the particular objects fulfilling the function 'x is blind' "in the manner of a form" ("ratione formae," in III *Sent.*, dist. 5, expos. textus) so that it ascribes to them a formal determination, 'Socrates' is predicated of the one object verifying the function 'x is Socrates' "in the manner of a supposit" ("ratione suppositi," cf. *ibid.*)<sup>20</sup> so that it identifies it as a subject of formal determinations. Thomas distinguishes this identifying kind of predication, which he designates "praedicatio per identitatem" from predication in the proper sense, which he terms "praedicatio per denominationem sive informationem" (*ibid.*)<sup>21</sup> If, in an instance of this "denominative" or "informative" predication, it is asserted of someone that he is blind, it is as if blindness were associated with the subject of the assertion as one of its determinant forms;<sup>22</sup> for the general concrete term 'blind' is the denominative (or paronymic) correlate of the singular abstract term 'blindness.'

Quine, having observed in *Methods of Logic* that the distinction between general and singular abstract terms is "a remnant of medie-

<sup>20</sup> H. McCabe, "Categories," in, A. Kenny (Ed.), *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 77.

<sup>21</sup> Also *Summa Theol.* I, q. 39, art. 5, ad 4; also art. 6, ad 2.

<sup>22</sup> "The mind connects a privation to its subject as if it were a formal determination." ("Intellectus componit privationem cum subjecto sicut formam quandam.") In II *Sent.*, dist. 37, q. 1, art. 2, ad 3.

val logic," attaches, precisely as a modern logician, great importance to it.<sup>23</sup> In "Designation and Existence," where he introduces the distinction between singular and general existence statements, he emphasizes that this distinction does not correspond to the difference obtaining between concrete and abstract objects, since both types of statements may assert the existence of both concrete and abstract entities.<sup>24</sup> Whether a sentence is used to make a singular or a general existence statement seems, according to Quine, to depend merely on whether what is asserted to exist is designated by a singular term (for example, 'Pegasus' or 'appendicitis') or a general one (for example, 'horse' or 'prime number'). According to this criterion both 'Blindness exists' and 'Socrates exists' are singular existence statements, the grammatical subject of each being a singular term: the abstract singular 'blindness' in the one case, the concrete singular 'Socrates' in the other. On the basis of this grammatical-syntactical viewpoint alone, the distinction, fundamental for Thomas, between two meanings of the sentence 'Socrates exists,' cannot be established.

## II

The method followed by Thomas in his study of the logical structure of what Quine calls singular existence statements has up to now led to results that can be recapitulated as follows. Just as the sentence 'Blindness exists' expresses the fact that among all animals one (or rather at least one) is blind in the *predicative* sense — in other words that there are animals of which the predicate 'blind' is true — the sentence 'Socrates exists,' in one of its two meanings, expresses the fact that among all men one (or rather exactly one) is *identical* with Socrates (or identifiable as Socrates), in other words that there is a man to whom the name 'Socrates' refers.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Methods of Logic* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 208.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> That the subject and predicate of a declarative sentence relate differently to the object of the assertion — the one making an attribution of a determining "form," the other naming something that underlies this form — is, in Thomas' view, also the case "in a certain sense" for asserations of identity. "But in a way this is also found to be the case for sentences in which one and the same thing is predicated of itself; for as predicates are taken formally and subjects materially, the mind, by making the one designation subject, takes it as the material substrate, the other, which it makes predicate, as a form determining the substrate." ("Sed et in propositionibus, in quibus idem praedicatur de se ipso, hoc aliquo modo invenitur; in quantum intellectus id, quod ponit ex parte subjecti, trahit ad partem suppositi, quod vero ponit ex parte praedicati, trahit ad naturam formae in supposito existentis, secundum quod dicitur quod praedicata tenentur formaliter, et subjecta materialiter.") *Summa Theol.* I, q. 13, art. 12 c. This is the reason why singular existence statements of the form 'There is such a thing as Pegasus' (Refer to Quine, "Designation and Existence") can be meaningfully denied. That Pegasus does not exist in the sense that nothing is identical with it ("There is no such thing as Pegasus," *ibid.*, 45) does not mean that the object designated by the proper noun 'Pegasus' is identical with nothing, but rather that the predicate '... is identical with Pegasus' is not true of any object.



But this means that neither 'Socrates exists' (when taken with this meaning), nor 'Blindness exists' expresses a singular statement, granted that the difference between singular and general statements consists in the fact that while the former assert of a *specific object* that *it* is such and such, the latter assert that among *all objects* within a definite range *each* is, or, alternatively, *some one* is such and such.<sup>26</sup> Hence the statement that there exists blindness is by reason of its logical structure a *general* (existentially quantified) *predicative statement* while the statement that Socrates exists is a *general statement of identity*.<sup>27</sup> If the existence of an individual, consisting in the fact that there is such an individual (for example, Socrates) is symbolized by 'E!'<sup>28</sup> it can be defined by means of the existential quantifier, the individual variable 'x,' the individual constant 'a,' and the identity sign in the following way:

$$(1) \quad E!a =_{df} (\exists x) (x = a)$$

This means that there is such an object as a if and only if some object x is identical with a.<sup>29</sup>

Let 'Socrates est' be taken to mean that there exists an x with the name 'Socrates'; the reason why Thomas designates 'est' an "accidental predicate" is that it does not belong to the essence of an object that something true be asserted of it either in thought or in word; the object of knowledge is not related to the knowledge, the knowledge is related to the object. "Accidit... unicuique rei quod aliquid de ipsa vere affirmetur intellectu vel voce. Nam res non refertur ad scientiam, sed e converso" (*In V Metaph.*, lect. 9, no.

<sup>26</sup> E. Tugendhat, *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die sprachanalytische Philosophie* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 310-13.

<sup>27</sup> Tugendhat emphasizes that "even the so-called singular existence statements, in spite of their appearance, are not about individuals; they are always general statements." (*Ibid.*, p. 378.) Also R. W. Trapp (*Analytische Ontologie* [Frankfurt a/M: Klostermann Verlag, 1976], p. 70) takes the assertion of singular existence as "only a special case of a general assertion containing the added assertion of uniqueness. ... Hence it is only a numerically definite general assertion of existence." This, of course, does not hold, as will appear below, for singular existence statements asserting that an object actually exists in the sense of having "esse in actu."

<sup>28</sup> N. Rescher, *Topics in Philosophical Logic* (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1968), pp. 138; also W. L. Gombocz, *Über E! Zur Semantik des Existenzprädikates und des ontologischen Argumentes für Gottes Existenz von Anselm von Canterbury*, Dissertations for the University of Graz, no. 31 (Vienna: Verband der Wissenschafts-Gesellschaften Österreichs, VI, 1974).

<sup>29</sup> I. Dapunt, "Zur Frage der Existenzvoraussetzungen in der Logik," in *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 11 (1970), pp. 89-96; J. Hintikka, "Existential Presuppositions and Their Elimination," in J. Hintikka, *Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1969), pp. 23-44; K. Lambert, "Free Logic and the Concept of Existence," in *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 8 (1967), pp. 133-44; W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (New York: Wiley Publishing Co., 1960), pp. 176 and 179. Lambert (*op. cit.*, pp. 140f) and Hintikka (*op. cit.*, pp. 40-42 and 76) take this definition of the concept of singular existence as the formalization corresponding to Quine's thesis that to be is to be the value of a (bound) variable.

896). That he has a name making it possible for him to be identified, or that he is "the value of a variable" for which a singular term designating him can be substituted, is accidental to Socrates insofar as it does not belong to his essence that he have a name and be thus the possible subject of true predications.

The being, however, that belongs to a thing on the basis of its nature is, in Thomas' expression, "substantial" (that is, essential) to it, so that the word 'est,' when used to assert this essential being of Socrates, constitutes an example of what he calls "substantial predication." "Esse vero, quod in sui natura unaquaeque res habet, est substantiale. Et ideo, cum dicitur 'Socrates est,' si ille 'est' primo modo accipiatur, est de praedicato substantiali" (*ibid.*). When it is said that a thing possesses being on the basis of its nature, so that the being belongs to it, not accidentally, but substantially, what is meant is that it is actualized according to its nature or essence — that it actually exists according to the mode of being specified by its essence.

Taken in this sense, the word 'ens,' according to Thomas, expresses a concept of being which is superior to each of the individual beings it subsumes, just as the concept of animal is superior to that of man. "...ens est superius ad unumquodque entium, sicut animal ad hominem" (*ibid.*). Thomas in no way contradicts this, saying in a different context (*Quaestiones Quodlibetales* II, q. 2, art. 1 [3] c) that a creature does not participate in being as does a species in its genus since being does not belong to its essence. The essence of a thing, he explains, comprises only what is contained in its definition. But since the characteristic of having being (that is, of existing) belongs neither to the genus nor to the specific difference making up the definition of a creature, and since whatever is not contained in the definition of a thing's essence is accidental to it, the being asserted of a thing in answer to the question *whether* it is ('an est') is accidental, unlike the being asserted of it in reply to the question *what* it is ('quid est'). For this reason Averroes, in his commentary on Book Δ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, takes the predicate of 'Socrates est' as accidental, for it expresses the existence of a thing as a matter of fact, or as something that is the case in the sense of being a truth.

And therefore the Commentator says that the proposition 'Socrates exists' is an example of accidental predication insofar as it asserts the factuality of a thing or the truth of a proposition. (Et ideo Commentator dicit in V *Metaph.* quod ista propositio 'Socrates est' est de accidentali praedicato, secundum quod importat entitatem rei, vel veritatem propositionis [*ibid.*].)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> R. Ponzalli, *Averrois in librum V (Δ) Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Commentarius*, Edizione condotta su manoscritti scelti con introduzione, note ed uno studio storico-filosofico (Berne: Francke, 1971), Commentum 14, pp. 131f, lines 100-05: "(Aristotle)... uses 'being' in this context to signify the truth of what is expressed, whether it be simple or

It was mentioned above that Thomas, in his own commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, recognizes, beyond the sense which Averroes lends the sentence 'Socrates est,' another in which the 'est' is used, not as an accidental, but as a substantial predicate.<sup>31</sup> When Socrates' existence is asserted, not in answer to the question whether there is such a man as Socrates, but in the substantial sense of the word, it is not meant that above and beyond his human nature Socrates has the additional attribute of existing, but that he has existence in the mode proper to his human nature. "...quod in sui natura... habet" (in *V Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896).<sup>32</sup>

In the section of his *Summa Theologiae* devoted to Christology, Thomas calls this one substantial being of Socrates ("esse substantiale," compare *Quaest. Quodlib. IX*, q. 2, art. 2 [3] c) — different from the several modes of his accidental being ("esse accidentale" [*ibid.*]) — the "personal being of Socrates" ("esse personale Socratis," III, q. 17, art. 2, c.). It comprises in a single being whatever belongs to the one person Socrates, whatever is true of Socrates, the human being, not in some particular respect ("secundum quid"), but as such ("...in quantum est Socrates; ...secundum quod est homo," *ibid.*); for a human being who, unlike Jesus Christ, has only a human nature (and not a divine one as well) does not exist otherwise than in the

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composite, in answer, that is, to a simple or a composite question. A composite proposition is one that asserts, for example, 'Socrates is musical,' or 'Socrates is not musical,' while a simple question is one that asks whether Socrates exists or does not exist. Generally speaking, the word 'being' in this context means the same as 'true.' ("[Aristoteles]... intendit per ens hic illud quod sonat verum aut simpliciter aut compositum, scilicet in quaesito singulari et composito. In propositione autem composita, sicut dicimus: 'Socrates est musicus' aut 'Socrates non est musicus'; in quaestione autem simplici, sicut dicimus 'utrum Socrates sit' aut 'non sit.' Et universaliter hoc nomen ens hic non significat nisi verum.") Also pp. 132f, lines 113-20 (quoted in n. 31).

<sup>31</sup> According to Averroes, the distinction between these two meanings was a matter of controversy among the different interpreters of Aristotle. "But it should be known that the word 'being' has one meaning when taken to assert the essence of a thing and another when taken to assert truth. Therefore the interpreters disagree on the doctrine of the simple question — that is, the question whether something exists — which is contained in *Topics II*. Some, who take 'being' to mean the same as 'truth,' would place the question among those pertaining to an accident; others, who take 'being' as what is common to the ten categories, place it among those pertaining to a genus." ("Sed debes scire quod universaliter hoc nomen ens, quod significat essentiam rei, est aliud ab ente quod significat verum. Et ideo expositores diversantur in quaesito simplici, scilicet dicere 'utrum aliquid sit,' [est] in secundo T[h]opicorum: utrum collocetur in quaestionibus accidentis aut generis. Qui enim intellexit de ente illud quod commune est decem praedicamentis, dixit quod collocatur in quaestionibus generis; et qui intellexit de ente illud quod intelligitur de vero, dixit quod collocatur in quaestionibus accidentis.") *Op. cit.*, pp. 132f, lines 113-20. See n. to ll. 115-17, which Ponzalli says is a text "difficult to establish" ("difficile a stabilire").

<sup>32</sup> This is the only perspective from which an actually existing object's falling under the concept 'being (in act)' ['ens (actu)'] *Quaest. Quodlib. IX*, q. 2, art. 2 (3) c) can be compared with the subordination of the concept 'man' under 'animal.' ("Ens est superius ad unumquodque entium, sicut animal ad hominem.") In *V Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896.) The concept 'being (in act)' is similar to the concept 'animal' only insofar as the predicate expressing it is not attributed to the objects falling under it in an accidental way, but simply, or in view of themselves. The difference stems from the fact that since the predicate 'being' is attributed in an analogous, not a univocal sense, to the objects of which it is true, it is not a generic term. Compare n. 33.



mode proper to his human nature. "Cuilibet homini, qui est suppositum solius naturae humanae, competit quod non habeat esse nisi secundum naturam humanam" (*Summa Theol.* III, q. 16, art. 10, ad 3).

This existence is substantial because it determines Socrates, not in any accidental way, but as such. Yet, since Socrates himself is not identical with it — only God *is* His existence — since he *has* it in the sense that it causes him to be actualized as the substance that he is, it is not itself a substance, but an accident of that substance which is Socrates. It differs from Socrates' other accidents in the important sense that although a property, it is not true of Socrates as if he were an independently existing subject, but constitutes him as an actually existing subject having properties. Socrates' substantial existence, consisting in the fact that he actually exists as the substance he is, is an accident; in contrast to the existence consisting in the fact that there is such a man as he, it does not belong to him accidentally ("per accidens"), however, but is asserted of him as such ("secundum se"). "Existence, though an accident, does not relate to its substance accidentally, but as its actuality." ("Esse est accidens, non quasi per accidens se habens, sed quasi actualitas cuiuslibet substantiae." *Quaest. Quodlib.* II, q. 2, art. 1 [3], ad 2.)<sup>33</sup> "The word 'est' is sometimes predicated of a thing as such; an example is the proposition 'Socrates est' when intended to mean merely that Socrates is one of the things in the world." ("Hoc verbum 'est' quandoque in enuntiatione praedicatur secundum se; ut cum dicitur 'Socrates est:' per quod nihil aliud intendimus significare, quam quod Socrates sit in rerum natura." In *II Periberm.*, cap. 10, lect. 2.)

<sup>33</sup> Thomas distinguishes carefully the *category* of accident, opposed to that of substance and a first level concept, from the *predicable* accident, a second level concept as genus, species, difference and "proprium" (he calls the five predicables the "quinque universalialia," *Summa Theol.* I, q. 77, art. 1, ad 5). Refer also to McCabe, *loc. cit.* On Gottlob Frege's distinction between first and second level concepts, refer to G. Patzig, *Sprache und Logik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 86-91. Actual existence, which, although an accident, is not asserted to belong accidentally to a thing, goes beyond this conceptual framework in two respects: Neither does existence itself, though an accident, and not a substance, fall *under* such (first level) concepts as quantity, quality or any other of the ten categories, nor does its concept, though the term expressing it (*ens [actu]*) is a substantial, and not an accidental, predicate (In *II Sent.*, dist. 34, q. 1, art. 1 c), fall *within* such (second level) concepts as genus, species or any other of the five predicables. These are two sides of the same fact. Every being is included under one of the ten categories (decem genera, *ibid.*); since actual existence is a property that belongs to a being in a manner specified by its particular category, the concept 'actually existing entity' ('ens actu') subsumes the individual entities (entia) "just as the concept 'animal' subsumes 'man'" (in *V Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896), not as if it were their highest genus (refer to *Quaest. Disp.*, *De veritate*, q. 1, art. 1 c: "ens non potest esse genus"), but rather in the sense that, just as every human being *as such* is an animal, every actualized being does not just happen ("per accidens") to exist, but does so *as such*; an actualized being is actually existent, not in some respect ("secundum quid"), but simply. (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 11, art. 2, ad 1; also *ibid.*, q. 14, art. 9 c: "The things that exist in actuality exist simply." "Simpliciter enim sunt quae actu sunt.")

Used with this substantial meaning, the 'est' in 'Socrates est' asserts existence of Socrates in the sense that he is actualized as the human being that he is essentially. Thomas designates the existence of a being in this sense of the word as its "act of being" ("actus essendi") or its "being in act" ("esse in actu").<sup>34</sup> When an organism is said to exist in the sense of this "esse in actu," it is simply asserted to live the kind of life determined by its species. "The existence of living things is their life" ("Vivere viventibus est esse"), says Thomas quoting Aristotle (*Summa Theol.* I, q. 18, art. 2, sed contra. Compare also *In I Sent.*, dist. 33, q. 1, art. 1, ad 1).

If the sentence 'Socrates est' is taken to assert the kind of existence consisting not merely in the fact that there is such a man as Socrates, but in the fact that Socrates is actualized, or lives, as the human being that he is essentially, then its logical structure is entirely different from that of a sentence making a general statement of identity. Given the there-is meaning, 'Socrates est' has the grammatical or syntactic form, but not the logical structure, of a sentence attributing a predicate to a subject designated by a singular term; given the fuller meaning, it has both the grammatical form and the logical structure of a sentence making a singular statement in which the predicate of (actual) existence (the predicate 'est [in actu]') is attributed to the human being designated by the proper noun 'Socrates.'

Statements of existence of this latter type may be called singular in the strict sense of the term; unlike those of the former type, which Quine calls singular, they have hardly found a place in modern logic. Following Thomas, Peter T. Geach worked out clearly<sup>35</sup> the distinction between the *actual* existence of a thing and the kind of existence that consists in the fact that *there is* that thing; he establishes as a condition for the actual existence of an object *x* the following criterion: "*x* is actual if and only if *x* either acts, or undergoes change, or both."<sup>36</sup> However he does not think it possible, as he observes in *God and the Soul*, to provide a clear definition of actual existence by this criterion.<sup>37</sup> Whoever is concerned to provide such a

<sup>34</sup> *In I Sent.*, dist. 8, q. 1, art. 1; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 4; *ibid.*, q. 4, art. 1; *ibid.*, q. 5, art. 1; *Quaest. Disp., De Veritate*, q. 1, art. 1, ad 1; *ibid.*, *De potentia*, q. 7, art. 2, ad 1. On this concept of being see W. Kluxen, "Thomas von Aquin: Das Seiende und seine Prinzipien," in *Grundprobleme der großen Philosophen. Philosophie des Altertums und des Mittelalters*, ed. by J. Speck (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 177-220.

<sup>35</sup> P. T. Geach, "Form and Existence," in *Aquinas* (refer to n. 20), pp. 29-53; also "Aquinas," in *Three Philosophers*, by G. E. M. Anscombe and P. T. Geach (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), pp. 65-125, esp. pp. 88-91; also P. T. Geach, *God and the Soul* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 42-74.

<sup>36</sup> *God and the Soul*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66: "I do not think this explanation or criterion can be developed into a definition." Refer also to *Three Philosophers*, 91. According to the definition for which D. P. Henry in his book *Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), invokes the authority of Thomas, an object *a* is existent if and only if it possesses unity (that is, iden-



definition of the concept of actual existence, which clearly cannot consist in the indication of a genus and specific difference, may proceed from Thomas' notion that the truth of a statement corresponds not only to being in the broad sense, that is, to the being of what there is, but also to the being that belongs only to actually existent things.<sup>38</sup> "The being of something in the world determines the truth or falsity of a statement." ("Ex hoc... quod aliquid in rerum natura est, sequitur veritas vel falsitas in propositione." In *V Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896.) "Whatever has natural existence in the world may be asserted to be in an affirmative statement." ("Omne quod habet naturale esse in rebus, potest significari per propositionem affirmativam esse." In *II Sent.*, dist. 34, q. 1, art. 1 c.)

A true statement asserting the actual existence of a thing is, of course, not true in the same way as one asserting that there is such a thing. Thomas uses the example of blindness. "Blindness is said to exist in a secondary sense insofar as the statement that something is blind is true; it is not said to be true in the primary sense, however

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tity with itself): "*a* is a being if and only if *a* is a haver of exactly-one-ness" (p. 100; also pp. 8, 37, 95-101). Thus defined, however, the concept of being has an extension much broader than that of 'being in act'; the fact that a thing has identity with itself or unity is a necessary, but by no means sufficient condition for its actual existence (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 11, art. 2, ad 1). If the concept of being is so defined as to make it include whatever is identical with itself, its extension will coincide with the members of what the modern logic of classes calls the universal class. (On this refer to E. Morscher, "Der Begriff des Seienden in der traditionellen Ontologie und der Begriff der Allklasse in der modernen Logik," in, Th. Michels [Ed.], *Heuresis*, Festschrift für A. Rohrer [Salzburg: O. Müller Verlag, 1969], pp. 141-68.) In his essay "Der Gegenstandsbereich der Metaphysik" (in, *Heuresis*, pp. 102-40), P. Weingartner proposes a "definition of being" and attempts to show that neither can the class of all beings be interpreted as the universal class, nor, as a result, the class of all non-beings as the null class (pp. 125f). Weingartner's definition of being, which, as he observes, is not to be taken as "a definition in the Aristotelian sense" but rather as an "implicit definition or an axiom" (129), is an instantiation of what in the logic of classes is called the principle of abstraction, according to which the extension of every monadic predicate is a class of objects (Quine, *Methods of Logic*, p. 242). Weingartner makes use of this principle to define being by attributing to it all the predicates true of it as such, in the sense that they all have the same extension. These are the predicates called in the Middle Ages the transcendentals; they are intensionally different from the concept of being, but extensionally they all coincide (Refer to pp. 129-35). Compared with the definition suggested by D. P. Henry, this one has the advantage of defining a being not merely as a member of the class of all existent objects, but as such (that is, insofar as existent, pp. 133-35). But neither definition provides any information as to what it means for a being to be, not in the broad sense of being one of the things that there are, but in the sense of being actualized (having "esse in actu"). (Refer also to Henry's essay "Being, Essence, and Existence," in, *Inquiries into Medieval Philosophy*, a collection in honor of F. P. Clarke [Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishers, 1971], pp. 123-30.)

<sup>38</sup> H. Weidemann, "Metaphysik und Sprache. Eine sprachphilosophische Untersuchung zu Thomas von Aquin und Aristoteles," *Symposion*, no. 52 (Munich: Karl Alber, 1975). The positions developed in that book on the relation of existence and truth require emendation insofar as they fail to distinguish clearly between the *fact* that a particular object exists (or did exist) at a particular time, and the very *act of existence* actually being completed by that object at that time, between the unalterable *factual truth* of, for example, the assertion that Socrates lived at a determinate time as the human being he is essentially, and the *actual truth*, inseparable from that determinate time, of the assertion that he is that human being *now* ('now' referring to one of the moments making up the period of time in which he lived). This difference is comparable to the one obtaining between the *fact* that Socrates died at such and such a time, and the actual *event* of his death.



[viz., that blindness exists].” (“Dicitur enim quod caecitas est secundo modo, ex eo quod vera est propositio, qua dicitur aliquid esse caecum; non tamen dicitur quod sit primo modo vera.” In V *Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896.) Hence the difference between the two statements of existence expressed by the one sentence ‘Socrates est’ stems from the fact that each is true under different conditions. That Socrates exists, in the sense that there is such a man as he, is true provided that it is in fact the case that some human being is identical with him; but that he exists in the sense of being alive is true only if he himself actually has the existence determined by his human nature or essence.<sup>39</sup>

In thus specifying the actual existence of a being, Thomas in no way resolves the distinction between essence and existence, to which, with good reason, he attaches such great importance. The fact that the essence of a thing is to be such and such is quite distinct from the fact that a thing is actualized (at a particular time) as that which its (timeless) essence specifies it to be. That the essence of Socrates is to be a human being does not of itself imply that he is actualized at the present time as the man his “singularis essentia” specifies him to be,<sup>40</sup> that is, it does not imply that that man actually exists.

Since whatever is transitory, say an organism, began actually to exist at one particular moment and at another will cease (“desinit esse actu,” *Summa Theol.* I, q. 50, art. 5 c; “incoepit esse,” *ibid.* III, q. 16, art. 9 c), its existence is temporal (“esse temporale,” *ibid.*, q. 17, art. 2, obj. 2; also *Quaest. Quodlib.* IX, q. 2, art. 2 [3], obj. 3); it always belongs to the thing at a moment which is the very present. The actual existence of a being occurs in the now. That is why Thomas speaks of the “esse nunc in actu” of a thing (*Summa Theol.* I, q. 14, art. 9; also *ibid.*, art. 13 c: “If something is considered as being in act, it is considered, not as a future, but as a present reality.” “Secundum quod iam actu est . . . non consideratur ut futurum, sed ut praesens”).

If the predicate ‘est,’ when asserting the actual existence of a thing, is formalized by the predicate symbol ‘E’ (not to be confused with the existential quantifier or with ‘E!’),<sup>41</sup> its temporality can be expressed symbolically by the addition of the time indicator ‘t<sub>i</sub>.’<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> An object can exist in the sense of having “esse in actu,” only if it has an essence (*essentia*), which is sometimes called its “whatness” (*quiditas*) < . . . >, sometimes its nature (*natura*), < . . . >. Refer to *De ente et essentia*, cap. 1.

<sup>40</sup> On the expressions ‘singularis essentia’ and ‘essentia Socratis’ refer to *Summa Contra Gent.* I, cap. 65, ed. Marietti, vol. II, pp. 74-76. Also to *De ente et essentia*, cap. 2, ed. by Roland-Gosselin, p. 11, l. 9; *Boeth. Trin.*, q. 5, art. 3 c, Decker ed., p. 185, ll. 16f.

<sup>41</sup> The distinction made by Geach between two senses of the predicate ‘exists,’ one, the “there-is sense,” expressed by the existential quantifier, in which it operates as a second-level predicate, the other, the “actuality sense,” in which it is used as a first level predicate, is argued convincingly by B. Miller in his article “In Defence of the Predicate ‘Exists,’”

On this basis the logical structure of the sentence 'Object *a* (in the present case the man, Socrates) actually exists at time  $t_1$ ' is not that of 'There is such an object as *a*'; it can be symbolized as follows:

$$(2) \quad E_{t_1}a$$

The relations obtaining between these two sentences and between the modes of existence to which they correspond remain to be clarified. It is recalled that the sentence 'Socrates est' asserts, in one of its two meanings, that among humans there is one identical with Socrates. Obviously, if some human being is identical with Socrates, then this must be one who actually exists (or existed) at some particular time. If this additional requirement be conjoined by means of the existence predicate 'E' and the existentially quantified variable 't' (which ranges over the present and all past moments) to the schema (1), the result is as follows:

$$(3) \quad E!a =_{\text{df}} (\exists x)[(x = a) \cdot (\exists t)(E_t x)]$$

This means that there is such an object as *a* if and only if some object *x* is identical with *a*, and actually exists (or existed) at some time *t* or other, the range of values of the individual variable *x* comprising not only all human beings now living, but also those who lived at some time and are now dead. For this reason, the sentence 'Socrates est,' meaning 'There is a human being who is Socrates' will remain true even when Socrates does not actually exist, that is, when he is no longer alive. The sentence would be false only if Socrates had never lived, that is, if his name did not refer to anyone. That his name does refer to someone, hence that he does exist in the sense that some human being is identical with him, is presupposed by the statement that he no longer exists, meaning that he has ceased to live.

Death, the privation of life (*Summa Theol.* III, q. 50, art. 6 c; also *ibid.* I, q. 18, art. 1 c and q. 33, art. 4, ad 2), removes the actual

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*Mind*, 84 (1975), pp. 338-54, esp. pp. 342-46. In refusing to recognize ' $(\exists x)(x = \text{Socrates})$ ' as an adequate rendering of 'Socrates exists,' however, Miller appears to overlook the fact that the above distinction is valid not only for general existence statements, which he discusses using the example 'Elephants exist,' but especially for singular existence statements like (in his example) 'Socrates exists.' That Miller makes use of this distinction in connection with singular statements as well, to which he does not, however, apply it systematically, is shown by the way he defends the meaningfulness of 'There is such a person as Cleopatra, who no longer has the property of existing' against M. Dummett (pp. 350f).

<sup>42</sup> Another possibility would be to take the existence predicate symbolized by 'E' not as a monadic but as a dyadic predicate (refer to E. Tugendhat, *Vorlesungen* . . . , p. 468). In this case the logical structure of the sentence 'Object *a* actually exists at time  $t_1$ ' is symbolized by  $E(a, t_1)$ , not by schema (2). Having argued that the temporal existence of a spatio-temporal object can be reduced to the existential quantifier (refer to "Existence in Space and Time," in, *Neue Hefte für Philosophie*, 8, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975], pp. 14-33), Tugendhat did well to re-open the question (*Vorlesungen* . . . , p. 471, n. 14).

existence of an organism but not its entire being. "No privation removes being totally since a privation is a negation true of a subject. . . . But every privation removes some being." ("Nulla privatio tollit totaliter esse, quia privatio est negatio in subjecto. . . . Sed tamen omnis privatio tollit aliquod esse." *Summa Theol.* I, q. 11, art. 2, ad 1.) Since it no longer exists actually, a dead organism is simply a non-being; but insofar as it once lived, it still is in a certain respect: it is a potential being. "Whatever . . . is a being in some respect, namely potentially, is a non-being in the simple sense, namely actually." ("Quod . . . secundum quid est ens, ut in potentia, est non ens simpliciter, id est actu" [*ibid.*].) As a negation true of a subject, the privation of life presupposes the existence of an object which has been deprived of its life. "The privation of being is grounded in being." ("Privatio entis fundatur in ente," *ibid.*). It presupposes that there is an organism of which it can be said that it is dead or that it no longer lives. "Non-being is a kind of being." ("Non ens est quoddam ens" [*ibid.*].)

Thomas distinguishes carefully between those things that do not exist in the sense that they do not have even the possibility of existence (DE in the diagram below)<sup>43</sup> and those that, although possible, are not in fact actualized (BD), whether they actually exist at no time, so that there are in fact no such things (CD), or at some time did or will actually exist but are not presently actualized (BC). "I call non-existent not merely those things that are simply without being, but also those that have potential, although not actual, being." ("Per non existentia intelligamus non ea simpliciter quae penitus non sunt, sed ea quae sunt in potentia et non in actu." *Summa Theol.* I, q. 5, art. 2, ad 2.) "It is to be observed that those things that do not actually exist fall into two categories: some, while they are not now in actual existence, either were or will be; others never were and never will be actualized although they lie within the power of God or of a creature." ("... horum quae actu non sunt, est attendenda quaedam diversitas. Quaedam enim, licet non sint nunc in actu, tamen vel fuerunt vel erunt . . . Quaedam vero sunt, quae sunt in potentia Dei vel creaturae, quae tamen nec sunt nec erunt neque fuerunt" [*ibid.*, q. 14, art. 9 c].)<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> This diagram is a modified version of the "basic table" of modalities in O. Becker's *Untersuchungen über den Modalkalkül* (Meisenheim/Glan: Hain Verlag, 1952), pp. 58-63. Refer in this connection to my essay "Möglichkeit und Wahrheit. Oskar Beckers modale Grundfigur und das Aristotelische Bivalenzprinzip," in, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 61, Fasc. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), and my article "Modalanalyse" (to appear in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*).

<sup>44</sup> Refer also to *Summa contra Gent.*, I, cap. 66, Marietti ed., vol. II, pp. 76-78. Also Geach, *Three Philosophers*, p. 90; *God and the Soul*, pp. 58f; "Form and Existence," p. 47.

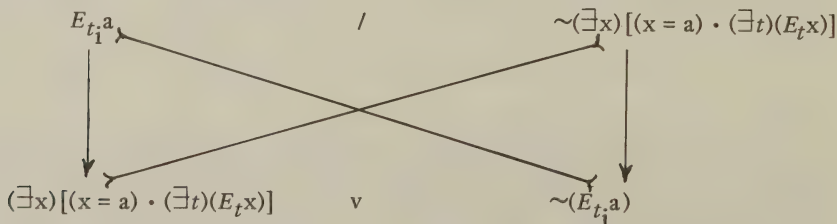


A	B	C	D	E
things possible			things impossible	
←————→			←-----→	
things that are, were or will be		things that neither are, nor were, nor will be		
←————→		←-----→		
things that actually exist now	things that do not actually exist now			
←————→	←-----→			

Hence the assertion that Socrates exists, meaning that there is such a one as he, and the assertion that he does not exist, meaning that he is no longer alive, relate as subcontraries ( $\vee$ ) and can be simultaneously true. Their contradictories ( $>\text{---}<$ ), the assertion that Socrates does not exist, meaning that there is no such one as he, and, respectively, that he does exist, meaning that he is now still living, relate as contraries ( $/$ ) and can be simultaneously false. And the two statements that there is such a one as Socrates and that Socrates is not living relate as subalternates ( $\text{---}>$ ) to the two statements, respectively, that Socrates is living and that there is no such one as he. Hence the logical relations of these four existence statements are exhibited by the traditional square of opposition.

A) Socrates actually exists or lives.

E) There is no such one as Socrates.



I) There is such a one as Socrates.

O) Socrates does not actually exist — is not alive.

The results of these considerations can be summed up in the following two points:

1) Thomas' analysis of statements asserting the existence of an abstract entity, that is, statements of the form 'There is P-ness (for example, blindness)', which Quine calls *singular existence statements*, leads him to view their logical structure as that of *general existence statements* of the form 'There are things which are P (for example, animate beings which are blind)' or as *particular predicative statements* of the form 'Some things are P.' A general statement of this type presupposes the existence of concrete individual objects of which it asserts that some of them are P.

2) Thomas recognizes a two-fold sense in which statements asserting the existence of a concrete individual (for example, the man, Socrates) — also called *singular existence statements* by Quine, and having the form 'a exists' — can be taken. He distinguishes between the existence of an individual, consisting in the fact that there is such a one (that this individual, in Quine's expression, is the value of a [bound] variable), and the actual existence ("esse in actu") of this individual, consisting — in the case of an animate being — in the fact that it is living the kind of life specified by its essence. Hence existence, in the sense relevant for metaphysics ("esse in actu"), the sense in which the 'est' in one of the two meanings of 'Socrates est' is to be taken, is not to be confused with existence in Quine's sense of being "the value of a variable," the sense in which the 'est' is to be taken in the other meaning of that sentence.

## POSTSCRIPT 1981

Further reflection on the account of singular existence statements given in Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has suggested to me that "Socrates exists," if understood as an answer to the question whether there is such a one as Socrates, should not be taken to mean that the propositional function "x is Socrates" is fulfilled for exactly one value of the individual variable "x," but rather that the propositional function "Socrates is  $\phi$ " is fulfilled for at least one value of the predicate variable " $\phi$ ." Consequently, schema (1) should be replaced by

$$(1') E!a =_{df} (\exists \phi) (\phi a)$$

and schema (3) by

$$(3') E!a =_{df} (\exists \phi) (\phi a) \cdot (\exists t) (E_t a).$$

It seems to me that the reason Aquinas gives for calling the word "est," if used in its 'there-is sense' as opposed to its 'actuality sense,' an accidental predicate — he says that "it is accidental to a thing that something true of it be expressed in thoughts or words" ("Accidit autem unicuique rei quod aliquid de ipsa vere affirmetur intellectu vel voce": In V *Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 896) — is better accounted for by (1') than by (1). For (1') means that there is such a thing as the individual a if and only if some predicate  $\phi$  or other is true of it. According to this definition, to be (in the sense of there being such a thing as . . .) is to be a possible subject of true predications.



THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TECHNIQUE AND JUSTICE  
IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*  
AND ITS METAPHYSICAL BASIS

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I. The Problem

Most classical scholars are of the opinion that the composition of the first book of Plato's *Republic* antedates that of the remaining books.<sup>1</sup> It would then be a member of the series of Plato's "aporetic dialogues of definition" and we might entitle it "Thrasymachus," the name of Socrates' principal interlocutor in the dialogue.<sup>2</sup> However this may be, there can be no doubt that the arguments in the first part of the dialogue traditionally known as *Republic* (or, *Concerning Justice*) do reveal a considerable degree of autonomy; and so it makes sense to make use of it as the starting point of an inquiry which, in its further progress, will draw on the metaphysical background found in the central section of the *Republic*.

This will make it possible to show up the superficiality of a way of thinking that is currently fashionable. I have in mind an attitude towards ancient philosophy and ancient ways of confronting the world in which there is talk of "a mimetic assimilation of the soul to dimensions of the universe that, apparently, were objects of contemplation."<sup>3</sup> We hear it said that the premodern world-view of the

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\* Translated from "Der Zusammenhang von Technik und Gerechtigkeit und seine metaphysische Grundlegung in Platons *Politeia*," in, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* (der Görresgesellschaft), 82, Jahrgang (1975).

<sup>1</sup> Compare P. Friedländer, *Platon II* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964), 45f, 286f, n. 1; III (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1960), 55f. The following abbreviations will be used: R 1 for the first book of the *Republic*, R 2 for the remaining books. R will indicate *Republic* simply.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 45; III, 55.

<sup>3</sup> J. Habermas, *Technik und Wissenschaft als Ideologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968), p. 150, also p. 110. This passage is representative. Besides Habermas, E. Topitsch has had frequent recourse to this *topos* in his publications.

West was in general determined by this idea of ontologically grounded norms, whereas the modern vision of the world, liberated from all of this, refuses to allow an open-ended future to be obstructed<sup>4</sup> by pre-given ends.

Nonetheless, at least Plato — one of the “fathers” of ancient philosophy and of the ancient view of the world — understands the problem of practical norms as a relation of the subject to a ground of Being that at one and the same time governs Being (*seinsmächtig*) and opens up subjective possibilities, in a manner more complicated and quite different from what the cliché of “mimetic assimilation” would suggest. Appropriately interpreted, Plato proves to be a theoretician who also has important things to say about our modern question concerning the foundation of practical norms in the face of a value-free science and technology. It is as though he had had a premonition of the perplexities in store for a technology neutral as to values, in the service of ends posited merely subjectively or intersubjectively. The greatest danger is that this technology<sup>5</sup> of making may gain autonomy and then, in a reciprocal process, dissolve the human subjectivity which might control it. Owing to technical mastery over objective processes, a subjectivity that was overextended to the point of self-dissolution could be observed as a possibility as early as the age of the sophists. Encountering this, Plato did not simply conjure up a natural order beyond the realm of human practice, void of subjective positing and of the problems this engenders.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, at least in the *Republic*, the question of practical norms, and in particular of justice, leads precisely to a reflection on the possibility of subjective positing. Such positing — seeing that it is itself made possible and is not content with bringing forth its own possibility — discovers freedom and measure in the ground that engenders its possibility, and thanks to the reason that is linked to it, reasoning able both to posit and be receptive.

## II. *Republic* 1

Let us proceed now to the text of *Republic* 1 or, to be more accurate, to a working out of the structure of its argument.

The setting is a discussion in the form of a conversation in the house of Kephalos, an old and wealthy businessman, first on the sub-

<sup>4</sup> The formulation is that of N. Luhmann, *Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalität* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Compare J. Wild, “Plato’s Theory of TEXNH,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1 [1940/41], 255-93 (= chap. 2, *Plato’s Theory of Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964)).

<sup>6</sup> In this important respect a criticism of absolutely posited subjectivity undertaken with Plato’s assistance differs from the partly similar approach of K. Löwith, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen: Zur Kritik der geschichtlichen Existenz* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960).

ject of old age, then on that of wealth. Socrates takes up a remark made by Kephalos to the effect that if one is able to look back upon an upright life, he can have a happy old age. Wealth, too, can contribute to this happiness, both through the many benefits that it confers, but also indirectly, by liberating the moderate and sensible man from the need to seize unfair advantage over another, to intrigue against him, or to be unable to pay off his debts. With this the preliminary conversation is at an end. Socrates now puts a question which launches the interlocutors on a dialectical and methodical course of investigation. "But as for precisely this, justice, are we to say . . . that it consists in telling the truth and in giving back that which one has received from somebody?" (331 C) Described abstractly, the following chain of definitions results from Socrates applying a certain method to the initial definition of justice, and to similar, everyday notions of justice. On a closer view, we are dealing here not with a method imported from outside, but rather with a development of the dialectic of conversation, after it has been reflected on and brought to order, a dialectic which inevitably occurs whenever people discuss with each other matters of fundamental importance.

From the three stages of this method the name hypoleptic-hermeneutic-dialectic can be derived. Hypolepsis<sup>7</sup> signifies the picking up of an opinion which might, for example, be a private or a more or less widespread notion about what justice is. Hermeneutic means the attempt to understand this opinion, for example by citing instances, by delimiting, generalizing, sketching in what follows from the definition. And dialectic — ominous word! — signifies here no more than the attempt to confute and refute, as far as is possible, the opinion which has been interpreted and made more precise.

Refutation proceeds through the demonstration of external or immanent contradictions. The former takes place when different and controversial opinions on the same topic are introduced, the latter, when an opinion is demonstrated to be self-contradictory. The second method of refutation is the safer. The first can bring one into difficulties since, strictly speaking, opinions, theses, and definitions can stand in contradiction only to propositions like themselves and not to facts. But then the question arises, what are the criteria on the basis of which one opinion ought to be granted preference to another that stands opposed to it. However, in discussions about practical, normative questions, the problem does not become acute if one assumes that a common, preliminary understanding of justice, for example, exists: this will merely be refined to an explicit understanding through the dialectical examination of opinions. After all,

<sup>7</sup> Compare J. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik, Studien zu Aristoteles und Hegel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969), pp. 64ff.



we have resort to the acid of dialectic in the expectation that something will be left over after the process of disintegration (compare R 539 B-D). Again, what would be the practical sense of a definition deduced in an exact procedure<sup>8</sup> from whatever sort of assumptions, if this definition were at odds with all previously available conceptions that had sprung up in the course of human life? Besides, as Socrates himself twice emphasized in *Republic* 1, his explications are meant to serve for orientation in the practical business of life.<sup>9</sup>

The method we have just outlined is applied to the first definition of justice, developed from the remarks made by Cephalos. Through generalization, a second definition is derived from the first, which had been limited to relations from the realm of business and the like, according to which justice is the restoring of things one has received from somebody else. According to the second definition, warranted by the authority of Simonides, justice consists in the giving to each person that which is owed to him (*ὀφειλόμενα*, 331 E). Here also that which is "owed" can be restricted to relations such as lending, exchanging and buying. Nonetheless, Socrates proposes that it be understood in the sense of what is befitting, suitable, proper (*προσῆκον*). Justice, then, would consist in the allotting to each what is due to him.

With this Socrates arrives rapidly at the definition of justice which in principle is identical<sup>10</sup> with the conception maintained much later in the book, where it is the upshot of the discussion (it is never called into question), namely, that justice is the possessing and doing that which belongs to one and is one's own (*ἡ τοῦ οἰκείου τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἔξις τε καὶ πράξις*, 433 E), that is, the doing of what one has aptitude for and the possessing what is required to do this. The difference between the two statements is that in the fourth book this is said of the primarily active subject; in the earlier passage the allotting to each what is owed to him is expressed with reference to the other person. With regard to either relation, however, the question is equally as to what concretely is the content of that which is appropriate or is one's own: where each person ought to be situated with respect to social status and material goods, and for which activity he is most likely to be suited within the framework of the political, or other kind of community. In this connection the question arises as to *how* that which is suitable for each can be deter-

<sup>8</sup> Compare Aristotle, *EN* 1, 1094 b 19f, on the themes of practical philosophy: "Therefore, in a discussion of such subjects, which has to start from a basis of this kind, we must be satisfied to indicate the truth with a rough and ready sketch . . . . For a well-schooled man is one who searches for that degree of precision in each kind of study which the nature of the subject at hand admits" (Ostwald's translation).

<sup>9</sup> Compare 344 E and 352 D: "the argument is not about a casual topic, but the manner in which one ought to live."

<sup>10</sup> So also K. Vretska, "Platonica III," *Wiener Studien* 71 (1958), 43.

mined and *who* (politically) is to determine this. No doubt the decision as to the *what* cannot be made abstractly and in general. Otherwise "general" would be equivalent in meaning to "in a lump sum" and thus be "superficial." Each concrete situation demands a concrete solution. By no means does Plato dispense with empirical conditions. They demand attention. Yet if rational orientation amid a variegated empirical reality is to be possible at all, then in the case of a decision having to do with an "ought" — with, for instance, what is due to somebody — we have to add another consideration aside from the empirically given fact and aside from considerations of technical feasibility. However, since this other, normative consideration is, in the end, meant to have effects which are empirically noticeable, the question of what is due passes over into that of how it is to be determined and realized. Practical cleverness is required for the concrete *realization*, and this is a form of reason which can hardly be communicated theoretically. But the *determination* of the want, of that which is to be realized, occurs at first in the theoretical relation of the empirical manifold to the points of orientation. These are not identical with the empirical points of view; rather, their varied and conflicting nature is exactly what motivates the search for norms, for the "Good." Plato, speaking of the Good, asserts that *every soul* strives for it and does all things for its sake, divining the existence of some such entity (505 E). The question is only whether every soul is equally suited to the quest or whether, as in other fields of endeavor, gradations exist along with the possibility of developing special abilities. Only on the assumption of equality in this regard would it be best to turn over the quest for norms and decisions about norms indifferently to everybody, that is, to the free play of the forces of society. Be this as it may, the three questions to which we have referred — what? how? who? — outline the basic problem of the *Republic*, as well as of Plato's practical philosophy, indeed of all subsequent ethical-political inquiry into norms of practice, whether agreeing with Plato or not.

In the first book of the *Republic*, Socrates attempts at once to direct the attention of his interlocutors to the search for a procedure in which "that which is due to one" may be determined and be put into practice. Insofar as justice is a doing (*πρᾶξις*), it would have to be a doing in conformity with procedures regulated by rules (*τέχνη*) — the object of the search. For this reason Socrates is able to call justice itself a *technē* and to seek it in analogy to the familiar techniques of medicine and cooking. It is noteworthy that the art of cooking is defined only indirectly with reference to the human being who eats the food, but directly with reference to the food. Cooking is that art which provides the foods with what is specifically due to them, namely tastiness (332 C). Of course the food ought then to

taste good to the person eating it. But it tastes good on account of certain possibilities which inhere in the foods themselves, possibilities which the *technē* has brought to actuality. The art of cooking is directed in the first instance to the release of these possibilities.<sup>11</sup>

It follows that the definition of justice given by Socrates in the first book of the *Republic* — giving to each what is appropriate — has to be understood in a way more general than had been assumed in showing that it is in principle identical with the definition of justice in the fourth book. “To each what is appropriate” means: not only to each human being, but also to each non-human being, the animals, for example, as Socrates will explain later in Book I when he refers to the art of the shepherd (345 C f) and to the art of riding (342 C). Socrates’ search is for a *technē* which will activate this universal justice or, alternatively, justice is that *technē* which provides everyone and everything with what is appropriate for it. However, when Socrates puts the question about it in these words, “What does that craft which we would call justice provide, and to whom does it provide this?” (with the intention, one presumes, of reiterating the answer already given or to make it more concrete), he gets from his partner, Polemarchos, the answer: “that (craft) which provides benefits to friends and injuries to enemies” (332 D).

That is a possible understanding, or misunderstanding, of the formula: “to each his own.” Benefits, after all, are appropriate to the friend, and injuries to the enemy. In contrast to the universal justice at which Socrates evidently was aiming in his definition, Polemarchos restricts justice to the human realm. Socrates, however, takes exception, not to this, but rather to the negation of the universally human through the introduction of the friend-foe distinction. He is able to demonstrate to Polemarchos that this subjective-perspectival understanding of justice is in contradiction to a different understanding of justice which Polemarchos, without reflection, deems to be compatible with it. Polemarchos turns out really to mean that benefits are appropriate to the good man, damage to the evil man (334 C ff). Socrates is able to convince Polemarchos that according to his own understanding of things, the evaluation “friend-enemy” is not identical with the evaluation “good-evil.” The former is more subjective

<sup>11</sup> In the *Gorgias* (462 D ff; 500 E ff) the art of cooking is characterized as a pseudo-art, whose end, like that of rhetoric, is not the best but merely the pleasant; even within the limits set by this end, it is still not a genuine *technē*, but mere experience (*ἐμπειρία*), “because it can render no rational account of the nature of that which it administers and so is unable to declare the ground of each particular thing” (465 A). This, however, is not a contradiction to the paradigmatic use of cooking in the first book of the *Republic*, since the polemics of the *Gorgias* are directed against cooking as it was prevalent in Athens at the time (and very likely, for the most part, still is today); scientifically based cooking, providing for both tastiness and for health, is conceivable. This Plato would scarcely have disputed. With regard to the significance he assigns to cooking, and the criticism he levels against cooking as it was actually practiced, Nietzsche is a Platonist (compare *Beyond Good and Evil*, no. 234).



than the latter, which measures according to a standard that is trans-subjective in intent, even if factually it employs the standard of a subjective perspective.

The formula "to each his own" means, then, the assignation of benefits to the good man and injury to the evil man. Nonetheless, Socrates challenges this transformed version of Polemarchos' definition of justice with the argument that the evil man, through the damage inflicted on him, will become even worse, that is, more unjust, and that this is something that cannot be in accord with the intent of justice (335 B ff). The assumption of Socrates' definition of justice is, evidently, that injury may not be inflicted on anyone or anything (human being, living being, inanimate being) – a universal ontological optimism. This may be seen also in the circumstance that as the dialogue progresses the interlocutors no longer speak neutrally of the proper (*προσῆκον*), but adopt the perspective of the person affected in talking positively in terms of the advantageous, the beneficial (*συμφέρον*).

In his discussion with Polemarchos Socrates combats what he shows to be an erroneous interpretation of that definition of justice which he himself favors; in the sequel he is forced to be content with someone who holds a fundamentally opposed definition of justice, at least from his own understanding of it. Thrasymachus, who from this point on is his interlocutor, demands that justice have nothing to do with the needful, the useful, the advantageous, the beneficial or the favorable (336 D); he is launching a fairly direct attack on Socrates' attempt to conceive of justice as something trans-subjective or at any rate intersubjective. Polemarchos, in his definition of justice, still made reference to the intersubjective realm of any particular group of people, and described an attitude whereby some, called "friends," benefitted each other at the expense of others, called "enemies." In Thrasymachus' view, justice, viewed from a specific, particularistic-subjective perspective, is "the advantage of the stronger" (338 C). Thus the concept of justice finds itself unambiguously aligned with subjective arbitrary will and in addition – something that allows it to conform to contemporary standards<sup>12</sup> – it is operationally practicable. For the stronger is precisely he who is able at the moment to enforce his notions of justice, which are determined by subjective interests, whether they are displayed openly or veiled in ideology. So this concept of justice is not merely, or rather it is not at all, theoretical, since it admits of no further argumentative explication, but rather contains as a constitutive element within itself a prescription for practical application. There-

<sup>12</sup> On this, R. Dahrendorf, "Lob des Thrasymachus. Zur Neuorientierung von politischer Theorie und politischer Analyse" in *Pfade aus Utopia* (Munich: Piper, 1967), pp. 294-313; O. Schwemmer, *Philosophie der Praxis* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), esp. p. 215.

fore it satisfies not only Western operational criteria but also Marxist demands for the unity of theory and practice. Furthermore, this concept is not as restricted to a particular and individualistic outlook as appears on Thrasymachus' initial introduction of it. In response to Socrates' request for explanation, he broadens his class of "strong men" so as to include the group of rulers, thus making justice "the advantage of the established regime" (339 A). The political rulers lay down the standards in their own interest, and they possess the power to elevate them to the rank of laws and to enforce them.

Thus Thrasymachus, with greater consistency than Polemarchos, espouses a theory which posits justice out of the intersubjectivity of the group. For the "bourgeois," pluralistic perspective of Polemarchos, the groups in question are, somewhat vaguely, friends and enemies. Thrasymachus by contrast defines justice in a pseudoaristocratic fashion on the basis of oligarchic intersubjectivity. Both are political (in the non-ethical sense of "political") concepts of justice. Later, in the second book of the *Republic*, it appears quite easy to work out a political extension of this definition, namely a democratic theory of conventionalism. For if the many weak (the proletarians, so to speak, of one country or of all countries) who are suffering under the partial justice of the strong minority make common cause, then, because they are the numerical majority, they are the stronger; they now for their part determine through law what is just and unjust (359 A).<sup>13</sup>

It remains questionable whether a subjectivity still more universal than that of a democratic majority, which, if the matter be considered precisely, is still a particular one, is conceivable or (what is even more questionable) could be put into practice. Yet even for an "intersubject" that declares that it is representing the interests common to human beings as a species,<sup>14</sup> and that lays claim to determine what justice is on the basis of this apparently universal interest, the objection made in the *Republic* by Socrates against Thrasymachus remains valid. The objection is aimed against any effort at defining justice on

<sup>13</sup> R 359 A; compare *Gorgias* 488 D ff. According to Nietzsche, that is exactly what happened on a world historical scale. With the help of a mediated Judaeo-Christian religion "a slave rebellion in morality" (compare *Genealogy of Morals*) was successful and led to the primacy of democratic and socialistic ideologies and structures of society. At first glance Nietzsche argues against this in Thrasymachean style on behalf of an oligarchic-individualistic positing of norms. Nonetheless, in spite of the official anti-Platonic stance assumed by his philosophy, there occur in it highly interesting shifts toward a Platonic-Aristotelian quest for trans-subjective hierarchies; these, to speak in Platonic language, issue out of innately given *erga* of the specific will to power. Nietzsche's "will to power," exhibiting, from the viewpoint of Platonic rationality, some decidedly irrational features, can also exercise self-control, and so assume one function of Platonic reason. The irrational features are reminiscent of Callicles' position in the *Gorgias*. On this, see the illuminating discussion in E. R. Dodds' ed. of the *Gorgias* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 387ff ("Socrates, Callicles and Nietzsche").

<sup>14</sup> To be precise, of course only certain subjects assert that they are representing this universal inter-subject. Marxism and Neo-Marxism from Marx to Habermas supply the ide-

the basis of subjective or intersubjective interests. According to Socrates, the sole source of justice is the intersubjectivity of reason. To be exact, it is rather a trans-subjective phenomenon, in that reason brings the subject into a relation with something that cannot be posited by the subject, and to this extent is not anything subjective, or subjective in a partial way.

As will be demonstrated in what follows, Socrates' argument makes use of three types of such a trans-subjectivity, of which the first type, however, passes only from the individual-subjective realm to the realm of intersubjectivity. The division into three types follows from the consideration given to three areas:

- 1) the area of the not-I, of the others, potentially all others (political or societal intersubjectivity, 341 C-341 E, 349 B-352 C);
- 2) of the non-human: animals, plants, things (cosmic trans-subjectivity, 341 C-342 E, 352 E-353 C);
- 3) of the non-subjective side of the subject itself, that is, the task which it must fulfill if it is to actualize the possibilities not posited by itself, and so first become that which it can be, namely a subject – or soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) as Plato names it (subjective trans-subjectivity).<sup>15</sup>

ology to justify this. With them in mind, M. Theunissen has remarked in a critical vein: "This exaggeration (of the truth value of intersubjectivity, R. M.) needs to be corrected by referring to the truism that intersubjectivity, even if extended to the human species, is still only a broadened subjectivity" (M. Theunissen, *Gesellschaft und Geschichte – Zur Kritik der kritischen Theorie* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969], p. 31). For his part Habermas in the "Afterword" to *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973) no longer opposed this criticism in Marxist fashion with an economic theory of the intersubject as an historical species, but rather appealed to the theory, developed elsewhere, of a truth that is at once theoretical and practical (ethical) "in the sense of the contrafactual possibility, always assumed in advance, of universal understanding" (p. 416). It would take us too far afield to identify the formalism, but also the concealed intersubjectivism and instrumentalism of this linguistic theory of natural practical truth (Habermas calls his contrafactual assumption a "fact of nature"). In general, excessive demands are made on language, and language is drawn into a circular structure of reasoning if it is, on the one hand, to constitute and to normalize the intersubject purely as a formal instrument of understanding prior to any determination of content, whereas, on the other hand, understanding is to take place within the intersubject, as a relation between speaking subjects.

<sup>15</sup> D. Henrich, in his masterly interpretation of the modern philosophy of subjectivity, recurs to Fichte and Hegel, and defines "subject" as "active coming to itself . . . which presupposes nothing save this 'to itself' and 'for itself'" (*Hegel im Kontext* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971], p. 37); the alternative to be developed from Plato's philosophy springs to mind. This alternative gains in interest in a situation in which the subject as process referred to itself and sufficient unto itself (*ibid.*, pp. 36ff, 95ff, 154ff) vanishes into the comprehensive process of Society's expanding control over nature. Here, to formulate it in a different way, the individual citizen is lost in the collective that society has become, insofar as he does not prefer a different way out. Whether Hegel is correctly interpreted in this connection, and whether he is not less a Fichtean and thinks instead in a more Platonic, Aristotelian, or ontological vein than Henrich supposes, that question in no way detracts from the value of Henrich's analysis for an interpretation of the contemporary world, though his analysis seems to be immanent to the systems he discusses.

Only an interpretation of Hegel which comprehended philosophy of history and logic, and these in their transition to philosophy of nature and of mind, could determine whether the "to itself" (*zu sich*) should finally, or also, be understood as a process determined by its beginning and by its end: a beginning existing in and of itself (*einen ansichseienden Anfang*), which attains consciousness of itself at the end of a process of development. Hegel aside, how could something come *to itself* if it had no other destination than the process of com-



In a counter-move that is also an extension of Thrasymachus' thesis about justice (that it is the advantage of the stronger, or of the regime in power) Socrates unfolds step by step his trans-subjective conception of justice, recurring to the connection between justice and *techné* developed near the beginning. Such a resumption is possible because, although Thrasymachus had in fact maintained that in his view justice had nothing to do with concepts like "advantage," he had notwithstanding this defined it as the advantage of the stronger. Socrates at once pounces on this contradiction between the program and the practice of Thrasymachus (339 A) and notes that the ruler too can err with respect to what his advantage is (339 C ff). The definition which follows from this, that justice is only what appears to the stronger to be to his advantage, is not accepted by Thrasymachus, who challenges it with the assertion that "no craftsman, wise man or ruler is in error during the time that he is a ruler" (340 E), which must mean, during the time that he possesses the requisite pragmatic knowledge and the power to put it into effect. This, however, provides Socrates with an opportunity to advert once again to the theme of *techné*, since evidently Thrasymachus tacitly presupposes a *techné* which will make it possible for the stronger to *understand* what is to his advantage and to establish it as a guide-line and a target for his actions. He is not asserting that the blind use of power will by itself suffice to bring about the advantage of the powerful ruler. In other words, Thrasymachus makes it possible for Socrates to undermine his position by exposing a possible contradiction between subjective and true interest.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, insight and a rational, learnable procedure (*techné*) is required for the determining of the true interest; in the sequel Socrates holds that *techné* is ever on the search for the advantage of

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ing to itself — an infinite progression? If, as Henrich writes, substantiality is in the subject "only a moment in its actual structure, which is to be self-relation unconditionally producing itself" (p. 38), the subject, on the other hand, is only a moment in the comprehensive process of production, ranging from substantial to material, that society is; *inter alia*, this process is productive in the millions of self-relations which produce themselves unconditionally, or alternatively, if the subjects happen not to be produced by it, it flows over and past them with the force of an alien substantiality. Opposed to this the substantial subject, which remains aware that nature is a condition of even its most subjective aspects, has so to speak its own gravity, which can function as an anchor in the stream.

When Plato presupposes an individually differentiated *ergon* for the soul, as well as for other beings, there is an implication that something lies behind and beneath the subject that is posited neither by a static nor by a processual self-relation, but rather is apprehended. Apprehending is closer to acknowledging than to positing. That by acknowledging the substance underlying the subject we do not acknowledge a completely different principle, which is alien to the subject, but its *eidós*, *idea*, is a notion shared by Plato and Hegel. This means that it is not correct to speak of the non-subjective element in the subject. Such speaking belongs to the concept of the subject according to the modern philosophy of subjectivity, with which Hegel is in agreement only to a limited degree. Hegel's program is: to understand what is true not as substance, but *just as much* as subject (compare Henrich, p. 37), and not as Henrich has it a bit further on (p. 95), to determine substance as subject.

<sup>16</sup> Compare *Gorgias* 466 E ff.

that with which it is concerned (342 B). Examples cited are the equestrian arts, which seek the advantage of horses (342 C); sheep-herding, that of the sheep (345 C f); medicine, that of the patient (342 D); and finally, the art of ruling, which seeks the advantage of the ruled (345 D). As was noted earlier with regard to Socrates' employment of the example of cooking, plainly the argument proceeds from the presupposition that what is advantageous for the object of a craft is at the same time best for the subject. Accordingly, the true interest of the subject of a *technē* would consist in perceiving and in procuring what is advantageous, beneficial and appropriate for its object. In this respect, the *technē politike*, the art of ruling or, more generally, the political art, takes its place as a member of the group of other arts, even if it is set apart by the fact that its objects are human beings who — some or all — are at the same time subjects of this and potentially of all the remaining arts.<sup>17</sup>

If, however, the arts provide their objects with what is specifically advantageous to them, then they are definite expressions of that art which was defined at the outset as justice, that is to say, the *technē* of providing each and every thing with what is suited to it. Techniques manifest justice when they are concerned with that which is specifically right for their objects. Justice, then, is this general attitude of service to the object, in the absence of which a *technē* is not truly a *technē*. As a constitutive element, justice is of course prominent in the art whose objects are human beings, that is, the political art, which according to the ancient sense of "political" has to do with everything that takes place between human beings. But this inter-human justice, being part of a more universal justice, cannot be arbitrarily posited by an intersubjective act of agreement.

Thrasymachus now appeals to the example of the art of herding, by way of objecting that shepherds manifestly tend their sheep only to get them fat for slaughter or have their fleeces grow thick for shearing. He asserts that the relation between rulers and ruled is a similar one (343 B). Socrates' refutation of this objection and his defense of his thesis about *technē* (that it tends to the best interests of its object) are alluded to only in passing (345 C ff). This defense makes use of a more stringent definition of the arts or crafts. The craft of herding is not identical with the craft of butchering, and the craft of cooking, which is responsible for the nutritious and tasty preparation of foods, is different from both. Every *technē* is in right order, as long as it provides for the best interests of the objects within its own realm. In that case — such is the sense of a tacit supposi-

<sup>17</sup> Compare R. Maurer, *Platons 'Staat' und die Demokratie: Historisch-systematische Überlegungen zur politischen Ethik und Metaphysik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970); and "Politische Wissenschaft nach Platon. Zum Problem Technokratie," *Der Staat* 15 (1976), pp. 53-87.

tion which reaches further than what is stated explicitly — the crafts which deal with the same object in the several stages of their engagement with it complement each other. To remain with our example, the craft of herding provides healthy sheep for the butcher's craft, and this in turn supplies good meat to the art of cooking. Finally, the meat is supplied to *human beings* by way of the *techne politike* as the highest craft, which is concerned not only that human beings live in a proper way with each other, and with the psychic presuppositions<sup>18</sup> for this, but also sees to it that men and material goods stand in a proper relation to each other. That which is best for the object, what every craft ought to provide, is therefore seen from the very beginning as not isolated from human purposes. It is, however, as a matter of course, brought into relation with them in the form of a mediation between the inherent rights of the object and the justified interests of the individual and of the "intersubject."

Ontological optimism, that is, optimism which encompasses all that is and explicates it in a rational way, is the fundamental presupposition made by this system of man and his environment. It rests on the assumption of a preestablished harmony between the possibilities inhering in the object of each craft and the subjective purposes in whose service these possibilities are developed and realized. For example, at the very outset it was taken for granted that good taste was that which was suitable for foods (332 C), and that meant good taste *for human beings*. This tacit, matter of fact "for" indicates first that man is the meaning, the purpose, the measure of all things. But secondly it contains a criticism of sophistic subjectivity and a withdrawal from it. This subjectivity found pregnant expression in Thrasymachus' definition of justice and, more comprehensively, in the "man the measure" thesis of Protagoras.<sup>19</sup> The norm, which emanates from the non-subject, is at the same time *for*, on behalf of, the subject and the "inter-subject," provided that the subject devotes itself to the object in an appropriate fashion. The appropriate manner of "devoting" is supplied by *episteme* and *techne* — which may be provisionally translated as science and technique — *if the attitude and the techne of justice belong to them both*; this is not only the theoretical, but the practical, the knowledgeable readiness to ascertain and promote what is suitable and advantageous for each thing.

Plato proceeds in this from the presupposition — the fundamental

<sup>18</sup> In the *Gorgias* (464 B), *τέχνη πολιτική* as the skill which has the soul for its province is distinguished from skills which have the body for theirs; thus it has a social-psychological aspect.

<sup>19</sup> Even though Plato's discussion of Protagoras' man-the-measure statement in the *Theaetetus* is primarily epistemological-ontological, the ethical-political significance of the problem also becomes manifest (172 A ff).



presupposition of ontological optimism — that everything which exists is good for something. Expressed in the terminology of the first book of the *Republic*, not men merely, but everything that exists has an *ergon*, that is, a task or “business” (*Geschäft*, as Schleiermacher translates it) — possibilities for good which naturally inhere in it. And this *ergon*, is not static; rather it is an openness (not a boundless but rather a finite openness) for development towards *arete*,<sup>20</sup> that is to say, to the optimal state or, as *arete* is sometimes translated, to “bestness.” After Thrasyarchus has admitted to Socrates that “the business of each thing is to do that which it alone can perform, or perform better than anything else” (353 A), Socrates can infer that for the soul too (that is, for the part of man which rules consciously)<sup>21</sup> there exists such a task and the possibility that the task will be fulfilled in the optimal manner. Now Thrasyarchus’ thesis on justice implied a judgment that the best condition of the soul consists in ruling. The soul arrives at its “bestness” when it controls not only the human being whose soul it is but also when it lays down its law as posited justice over as large an area under its power as possible. On this thesis soul is understood exactly in the same way as in the modern explications of Hobbes and Nietzsche: it is will to power. The difficulty, however, which Socratic dialectic created for Thrasyarchus lay in his failure to answer the question: power for what? or, what is the law which the soul lays down for others in its own interest? If soul is will to power, the interest of the soul would be power, and the purpose of power would be increase of power — a solution which does not even satisfy logically on account of the infinite progression it entails.

<sup>20</sup> Plato discusses *ἀρετή* in its universal significance at, for example, R 601 D, *Gorgias* 506 D-E. In these accounts, body, soul, and all living things can have “virtues,” but so can all utensils, that is, all things which can serve for human use — and what cannot so serve? Virtue reveals itself in the use (*χρεία*, R. 601 D); in the *Gorgias* it is defined more exactly as a certain order that inheres in each and every thing according to its nature, that makes every being good (*κόσμος τις ἅρα ἐγγενόμενος ἐν ἐκάστῳ ὃ ἐκάστου οἰκείος ἀγαθὸν παρέχει ἐκάστου πῶν ὄντων*). However, this order comes about not *εἰκῇ* (haphazardly, willy-nilly, without design or deliberation) but rather through ordering, right disposing, skill (*τάξει, ὁρθότητι, τέχνη*).

Ordering appears here twice, as inherent and as executed. *Techne* engenders an ordering (*τάξις*) by developing the order (*κόσμος*) which is innately present (*ἐγγενόμενος*) in each of its objects specifically (*οἰκείως*). In this context Plato speaks more directly than in R 1 about the virtue of the soul as the order specific to the soul which has to be developed, without mentioning that the soul has a function as the subject of *techne*. Nor does he pose the question as to the aid of the development. For, evidently, the innate order of the soul with its “technical” possibilities permits possibilities for free development. Development according to innate faculties is good. If, however, the innate order makes possible several directions of development, are all good or equally good? On this, see Part III below.

For the *Gorgias* passage cited, compare H. J. Krämer, *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1959), esp. 65ff; J. Kube, *TEXNH und APETH* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969) offers a less “ontological” treatment of *ἀρετή*, discussing it more as an already existing order for “technical” development.

<sup>21</sup> According to R 353 D, the business of the soul is: caring, ruling, deliberating — *ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ἄρχειν, βουλευεσθαι*.

However, a tacit presupposition seemingly shared by Thrasymachus is that reason, the capacity for deliberating about purposes, ends, and means, belongs to the soul. And if reason arrives at the conclusion that everything that exists has a specific *ergon*, then the *ergon* and *arete* of the soul can neither reside only in the soul's *ergon* (however this be defined) nor be taken to be the measure of all things. On the contrary, the *ergon* of the soul is to perceive *erga* of all souls, all living beings, all things (through the quite old-fashioned means of an *adaequatio rei et intellectus*).<sup>23</sup> and it attains its own *arete* — Justice — when for its part, through *techné*, it assists the *erga* perceived by it to attain their bestness. Socrates' concluding definition of justice, that it is the excellence of the soul, is linked with the initial definition, that justice is the provision of what is advantageous to each and everything, in the following way. The soul attains its best possible condition [the good life (353 E)] in taking care that whatever else exists but which (above all through lack of reason) is unable or less well able to take such care, attains to its own optimal condition. Once one has recognized this connection between the initial and the concluding definition of justice in *Republic* 1 the riddle posed by the sequence of arguments is solved. Understood in this way, it is not an aporetic dialogue, despite the fact that at the very end Socrates announces that the question about justice has not been solved.

### III. The Metaphysical Foundation

It is likely that the aporetic coda to the first book of the *Republic* is a transitional passage, appended later as a bridge to the further elaboration on justice in the following books. Much, indeed, remains to be discussed, two themes above all: how politically to actualize justice, and its ontological and metaphysical underpinnings. As for the second theme, the underpinnings, treated in the central parts of the *Republic*, little that is in principle new appears when compared with the first book. Since I have already set forth elsewhere an interpretation of the central, metaphysical portion of the *Republic*,<sup>24</sup> I may be permitted to refer summarily here to that publication, so as

<sup>23</sup> Compare C. F. v. Weizsäcker, "Die Aktualität der Tradition. Platons Logik," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 80 (1973), 221-41, esp. 240. "Truth is correspondence. It is not however the unclear outline of an agreement or correspondence between thought and state of affairs, but rather correspondence between the *Eidos* in speech and the *Eidos* in things." It is doubtful (1) whether one can evict this problem of *adaequatio* (assimilation, correspondence, agreement) from the concept of truth, without entirely replacing the traditional theory and practice of *truth* by *positing*; or (2) whether assimilation can be thought without assuming an *Eidos* which comprehends subject and substance. If however one chooses the replacement, a third problem arises: are not excessive demands being placed upon the possibility of subjective and intersubjective positing? Nietzsche's philosophy grapples with these thorny problems. For J. Habermas, on the other hand, the sense of the problem clearly is brought down (compare "Wahrheitstheorien" in *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion, Festschrift für W. Schulz* [Pfullingen: Neske, 1973], pp. 211-65).

to solidify the proposition that, in principle, the positions advanced in the first and in the subsequent books are consistent. If, moreover, there is such a consistency — and this is a further consideration brought out in what follows — then the arguments of the first book may be used to elucidate the “Idea of the Good,” the concept at the center of Platonic metaphysics which has proved to be a conundrum for scholarship.

To put it more concretely, we shall be elucidating and corroborating the following thesis: the basic presupposition of *Republic* 1, that everything that exists has an *ergon* which with the help of *techne* can be developed to *arete*, is in principle identical with the subsequent basic metaphysical proposition that the idea of the Good is “the principle of all that exists” (τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχή, 511 B). A preliminary formulation of the difference that lies concealed within this basic identity runs as follows: the language of the first book is more that of the concepts of practical philosophy, that of the middle section more that of theoretical philosophy. However, the fact that the same thing is said in a different language serves as an indication that for Plato no gulf yawns between theoretical and practical Philosophy. This in itself leads to the supposition that Plato’s theoretical philosophy is a metaphysics of practice,<sup>25</sup> and thus not only a metaphysics of substance, but a metaphysics of the subject, a metaphysics not merely of structure and of law, but one containing an approach to a metaphysics of freedom. Were it purely a teaching about substance and structure and also, perhaps, process, one would be obliged to speak of an ontology. That would, however, be an ontology divorced from metaphysics, which as such would fail to reflect on why, for the subject, the “ὄν” [being] can be “logical.”

In accord with the double-faceted unity of the practical and the theoretical approach in Plato, the ascent to the Idea of the Good as the ground takes place in a twofold manner. At first it appears as a way of solving an ethical-political perplexity, then as one of solving an epistemological perplexity. In each case, the perplexity arises out of the tension between two poles, one which threatens to become a chasm. The solution is found not in the collapse of the poles and thus in bringing about an end of the tension (as in the “philosophy of identity”); rather, the path to a possible solution leads through the question of a ground common to both which preserves the poles in their relation of tension. Evidently the optimistic assumption predominates, namely that the ground renders possible the fruitfulness of the tension and that the subject endowed with reason, who makes

<sup>24</sup> Platons ‘Staat’ und die Demokratie, op. cit., §§33-40.

<sup>25</sup> R. Maurer, “Idealismus als Reflexion der Praxis” in, *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, ed. M. Riedel, Vol. II (Freiburg: Rombach, 1974), pp. 563ff.



up at least one of the poles, can orient himself to the ground in such a way as not to let the tension become excessive. There results the likelihood that a fruitful tension can be realized. This presupposition is the theoretical side of what from a practical point of view was called ontological optimism.

As the argument of the *Republic* unfolds, first the tension between subject and object in respect to the quest for justice becomes thematic, and second the tension between subject and object in respect to the question concerning truth. Thus there are two paths to the "Idea of the Good."

1. As we know, the question with which the *Republic* begins is that of justice. Justice comes into view as a possible solution to the tension between subjects, between human beings, which is threatened unceasingly by destructive conflicts. Soon it appears that the search for justice has as its aim the answer to the question: what is due and to whom? The answer of Socrates is: to each that which is his own. This formula implies the further problem: *who* is to determine for each person what is to be his, and, with reference to that standard, *how* is it to be determined? Will it suffice if the rulers, or others who do the determining, have, on the one hand, items of information about the many subjects and about their claims, along with the goods available (ranging from material things to rank in society) and, on the other, if they render their decisions according to what appears to them to be best or in harmony with established conventions and traditions? Or is the question about justice approached better if the subjects, set in equal starting places and granted approximate knowledge of the techniques of production, struggle with each other and negotiate as to what is to be justice. Solutions of the problem in either direction might make demands of the subjects and of the material things greater than their inherent possibilities allow.

It is admitted that everything that exists has in it possibilities which, given the help of science and technology, can be developed as its specific *ergon*. Yet the desire to have more (*πλεονεξία*) or blind infatuation (*ὑβρις*) can influence the subject either individually or collectively (where its feeling of strength is even greater) so that it attempts to ignore the limits of the possible. If the possible were agreed upon, such an attempt would make no sense from the very outset. But what is at issue with regard to the *hybris* we have mentioned is not this; rather it is the conviction (and it can have consequences which are effective in practice) that *techne* does not develop, but rather posits possibilities, that is, it makes them.

In the second place, the ignoring of the limits of what is possible can mean that evil possibilities, which lead with rapidity into the realm of what is impossible, are realized; for there is concealed in the turn of phrase "the limits of the possible" the tacit presupposition

that the possibilities are good. It would then hold true that the boundaries which have been ignored run between the possibilities for good and for evil.

The question about the limits of the possible concerns the basic attitudes (varying from one culture to the next) which individuals hold. However, what the society lays down to be justice and what the written laws enjoin, determine where the boundaries will be with respect to the possibilities for good and evil.<sup>26</sup> Yet in this way the true boundary between good and evil possibilities can be disguised, while the question about the fundamental attitude and its significance for social justice is utterly lost from sight.

For this reason something else, something that goes beyond the relations of subjects and material things, is needful, something at which sight may be directed so as to determine what is justice. Thus in the *Republic* and *Theaetetus* Socrates calls for an insight "through which the just . . . first becomes useful and beneficial."<sup>27</sup> This insight he calls the "Idea of the Good" because it discloses the possibilities for good in all things which are open to reason and, as such, already exist. In this way they first become consciously realizable possibilities, and for the subject, objective possibilities.

2. Without doing away with the tension between the subjects, this structure relaxes it, because it refers them to a trans-subjective standard. Within it, however, there comes to light a new tension, that between the subject and the object of knowledge. For things and human beings are to be made objective and judged with a view to the possibilities discovered as previously existing in them, which can be brought to a unity, as well as with respect to whether these possibilities are good. In this connection the question arises whether success in unifying these harmoniously in an immanent way is the measure of their goodness, or whether their measure, the "Idea of the Good," is to be viewed as a further, a transcendent object of knowledge.

Certainly this way of posing the question in the form of alternatives can be misleading, since the transcendence here at issue leads, so to speak, downwards. The question centers on the "Idea of the Good" as the *ground* of all things. During this second approach especially the Idea is considered as the ground which makes possible the relation between subject and object. Thus it is not an object of knowledge like other objects, one which stands opposed to the subjects; in approaching it we come to reflect rather on the subject-object relationship and on the possibility of subject and object. This

<sup>26</sup> "And that is why they began then to establish laws and contracts with each other and to call that imposed on them by the law the lawful and the just" (R 359 A).

<sup>27</sup> R 505 A; compare *Theaetetus* 167 C, 172 A-B.

reflective withdrawal from the world of objects pure and simple is further complicated by the fact that in the subject-object relation, as it here becomes thematic, the evaluation of the object according to its good and bad possibilities plays a role. The ground, then, would have to make possible not only knowledge, but also knowledge of values and of practice in accord with these values.

The special problem raised by this second approach consists in construing what it means to "make possible" in such a way that at the same time the reasonable distinction between good and bad possibilities is made possible. In the *Republic*, the complex of epistemological questions is meant to assist in the solution of perplexities which come to light in the first part of the discussion of justice, the ethical and political part. Thus what in appearance is epistemology is revealed as a metaphysics of practice.

It is well known that Plato does not use the terms subject and object, but speaks rather of the perceiver and the perceived, as well as of the thinker and what is thought (507 B ff); substantively, these amount to much the same thing. Now the Idea of the Good is not visible, but has rather to be thought; however, since the relation of seeing and being seen is analogous to the relation of thinking and being thought, seeing can serve as a simpler model of that which we are seeking. In both instances — seeing and thinking — Socrates requires an inference from the pre-given possibility that is everywhere actualized to that which makes it possible. Thus seeing is possible on the basis of the capacity (*dynamis*) of seeing and being seen (507 C). Yet both sides, subject and object, their possibilities linked one to the other, do not suffice to explain the act of seeing. Without the introduction of a third element, light, seeing does not take place.

In the sequel, light is understood not as a mere condition which must be fulfilled merely that the subjective and objective possibilities may become real; it is, rather, explicated through the myth of the sun, supposed to be a god, as that which makes the possibilities possible. But even if we abstract from this mythological deity Helios, we can grasp what it is Plato has in mind: the subjective and objective possibilities are such as to be capable of actualization only when they are linked by a third element, by "a more honorable yoke," as he puts it (508 A). And this making possible of the subjective and objective possibilities in their relation to each other is not posited by these themselves, it does not lie within their power, as is shown by the part played by light in the making possible of seeing.<sup>28</sup>

We turn now to the application of the model to thinking, the relation which is the heart of the issue for us. For justice, understood as

<sup>28</sup> Compare W. Beierwaltes, *Lux intelligibilis. Untersuchung zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen* (Diss., Munich, 1957).



that which is due to each, is after all a content of thought (507 B). Neither is it visible nor can it be identified solely with reference to empirical data. It is true that the possibilities of the subjects and of the material goods which the *technē* of justice is supposed to bring into harmonious association can be comprehended empirically and in some degree even measured. However, the *good* possibilities, that is, those the actualization of which in the future will have not destructive, but rather useful and beneficial<sup>29</sup> effects for subject or object or both, are not to be got by such means. Following Plato's line of thought in the central part of the *Republic* one might establish the limits of *technē* in actualizing possibilities, provided one knows the power specifically at work in the capabilities of subject and object and in their connection with *technē*. Only if *technē* is suited to this power is it at the same time justice, and only then is the "ought" which justice implies not simply a demand to be actualized brutally, in the teeth of reality, by means of a technology neutral as to justice.

Since everything that exists, whether things or human beings, including the capacities which inhere in the beings, reaching up to the human capacity for thought, makes up the realm of Beingness (*οὐσία*), the ground (*ἀρχή*) or the cause (*αἰτία*) of the capacities — that which makes it possible for the capacities of each to reach beyond what exists — lies beyond Beingness, since the beings cannot adequately be explained out of themselves. And the point of departure for Plato was, finally, that the capacity of thinking (as, to begin with, a subjective capacity) does not of itself posit the capacity of being thought (as an objective capacity). It is capable of something, namely knowing, only if there is something that allows itself to be known. Since, however, there is knowing — this is Plato's starting point — there must also be a third something, a ground, which makes possible together the subjective and objective capacity for knowing, something which "provides truth to the objects of knowledge and provides the capacity (*δύναμις*) to him who is engaged in knowing" (508 B).

And both sides possess these capacities, not merely as objects of thought, but as existing. For this reason they must exercise their capacities within the realm of what exists and carry out their work on things that are; this is possible only if the ground establishes Beingness along with knowability. *It is the cause of what is as what is in and of itself "logical."* Provided one bears this in mind, it is permis-

<sup>29</sup> It is true that "beneficial" is not always, namely, not in exceptional cases, identical with "preserving life." For Platonic metaphysical ethics life is not in every instance the highest of goods, as it is for the predominant currents of modern ethics (compare H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959], esp. pp. 313ff). The arguments of the *Crito* show that it is beneficial for Socrates to drink the hemlock ordained for him, even though he could avoid it. Precisely the struggle for the good possibilities can lead, for the struggling subject, to the impossibilities which other people impose on him before they themselves fall victim. Examples of this are to be found amongst those Germans who resisted Hitler.

sible to speak of a Platonic onto-logy.

But evidently because the ground makes knowledge possible not merely in the form of a detached beholding of what exists, for example of "the proportions of the universe."<sup>30</sup> but also as a mode of *orientation* for techniques of acting and making, Plato can call it the "Idea of the Good" or "the Good itself." Of it he says that it is not Beingness (and so clearly not Being that can be beheld), but rather that it far surpasses Beingness in dignity and in power.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, ontology is granted admission into something that might be called meta-ontology conceived of as a metaphysics of practice.

For it explains the possibility of practice, especially of practice executed with competence, in accord with reason and the norms of art (that is to say, of specifically human Being), within a theory of Beingness that lies beyond Being. This further step is required in order to comprehend practice and in particular *technē* in the powers they wield over all that exists. Human beings possess the vigor and the freedom to act and to produce; they have the power to envisage goals and to realize them thanks to rules and procedures. These are goals that pass beyond what has previously existed. This fact of practical activity allows an inference to be drawn to a ground of Being beyond Beingness which makes it possible for beings to have this capacity of transcending the status quo, in particular with regard to the interplay of subject and object. Admittedly, the power of *technē*, in which this ability to transcend appears with special force, is not absolute; it runs to an exceptional degree the risk of error and blunder. The relation it brings about between human beings and things is fraught with tension; for this reason it compels *reflection* on the relation between subject and object in scientific or prescientific knowledge on which it is founded, and upon the ground of its possibility.

In removing a deficiency of its own that consists in starting out, as do the other sciences, from mere hypotheses, philosophical reflection — purely in the relation of knowledge to knowledge, of thought to thoughts (532 A) — finally arrives at a *result attained by thought, one that as such negates itself* — the thought of a ground which endows everything with being and therewith bestows on human being, which is able to establish with it a relation in thought, the ability to detach itself from other beings and to dominate them through technique. This ability, however, comes to fulfillment in a good and

<sup>30</sup> See Section I for the quotation from Habermas.

<sup>31</sup> οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβεῖα καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος. For the interpretation of the Idea of the Good as not merely an ontological, but also teleological-axiological principle, compare E. de Strycker's recent controversy with H. J. Krämer, "L'idée du Bien dans la 'République' de Platon," in, *Antiquité Classique* 39 (1970), 450-67; H. J. Kramer, ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΑ ΤΗΣ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 51 (1969), 1-30.

just manner only if it corresponds to the power which renders possible it and its counterpart, subject and object, in their relation to each other. For a thorough understanding of this power, knowledge of the Idea of the Good as the ground of all things would be requisite. The Idea of the Good, one might say, is the side of this power proceeding from the ground which, being related to human reason, faces towards it. Socrates himself seems to doubt whether full comprehension of the idea is attainable. He restricts himself finally to the statement that there exists an Idea of the Good or the Good itself; *this* much needs to be affirmed, but as to whether it can fully be comprehended, he is unable to state with confidence (533 A).

For Plato, therefore, there exists no metaphysics of practice such that norms of action could be derived from it directly.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, there follows from the consideration of the central part of the *Republic* (which may be called metaphysical) a fundamental kind of readiness which surely issues in practice. This is a readiness to presuppose, or rather to recognize, in the subject and object possibilities which cannot be posited by *episteme* and *techne*, but can be known only through reason opening itself to them. The educational program devised by Plato in the *Republic* for his philosopher-kings culminates in the formation and inculcation of such an attitude. It rests on the insight which, in the final resort, emanates from the dialectic of subject and object, namely that the Idea of the Good exists as the ground of all things. The practical training in this basic attitude and its concrete expression are additional problems, to the solution of which the *Republic* offers proposals (suitable to Plato's own epoch).

Although this is explicated in the cautious manner characteristic of Socrates, it gives an answer to the initial question: *who* can determine, and *how* can he determine, what is to the advantage of all? Whether few or many or all, it is those who have attained the required insight and way of beholding things. Thus the quest for a method to determine the advantageous, a desideratum in the reflections of *Republic* 1, has become exceedingly complicated. The *ergon* of the objects of *episteme* and *techne*, to which corresponds the *ergon* of the soul, is at bottom identical with the Idea of the Good. But in the

<sup>32</sup> In this respect, then, Plato's philosophy would not be at odds with that of Thomas Aquinas, if what L. Oeing-Hanhoff asserts about Thomas' "metaphysics of action" is true — that no norms of action can "immediately" be derived from it (*Der Mensch: Natur oder Geschichte?* [Münchener Akademie Schriften. Vol. 55, Munich, n.d.]; compare W. Kluxen, *Philosophische Ethik bei Thomas von Aquin* [Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1964]). But, if not immediately, then surely mediately. Otherwise it remains obscure on what an ethics and practical philosophy, isolated from all the rest of philosophy, especially from the traditional first philosophy, metaphysics, could be based. For neither does theology, which would be the candidate to replace metaphysics (compare Kluxen), bring forth a non-mediated justification for norms of action. Nonetheless, a mediated justification, possibly through a metaphysics of practice, ought to be considered (see n. 33 below), unless one presupposes that no justification, other than one emanating from expressions of will ascertainable by technical and social-technical methods, is necessary; in comparison with these, all attempts at justification would then detract from freedom.



first book the *ergon* could still appear to be something given empirically, a teleology of the Good that is virtually perceptible, and, beyond that, an empirical-practical concordance of fact and value, of the is and the ought, in the individual subject and object. In the first book, that which later is differentiated into the Idea of the Good and those possibilities of beings which are open to technical development is still conceptually united in the concept of the *ergon*, as though without further consideration these possibilities could be presumed to be good. The connection brought out between *techne* and justice, however, contains the germ of complications considered later.

As the discussion of the *Republic* proceeds, it becomes clear that the problem of distinguishing possibility as such and possibility for good is not to be solved within the conceptual framework of practical philosophy, but that there is a need for ontological and meta-ontological reflection. According to *Republic* 2, it is only in the realm beyond Beingness that thinking and Being, Being and Oughtness, coalesce into a unity which posits norms and which, although only with difficulty, is in principle transparent to reason. "Being" (to set it apart, with Heidegger, from "beings" as well as from "Beingness") we designate as that which renders possible the capacities which subject and object have; whatever is comprehended under the "ought," especially the "virtue" of justice, is to be understood as the subjectively possible "putting to work" in harmony with a power whose subjective and objective elements correspond to each other in a preestablished harmony (to use the term of Leibniz).

Action, then, must be undertaken in accord with this trans-subjective and trans-objective rendering possible (*dynamis*), if the subjective and objective possibilities are not to be strained beyond measure. It is only in the Idea of the Good, which is said to be beyond Beingness and therewith beyond the gap between subject and object, that Being and Oughtness fall together; only here, then, do we have assimilation. This is not an orientation with regard to "contemplated proportions of the whole that is the world" but with regard to the ground common to subject and object. Despite the subject's opposition to the object, it dare not forget this common ground, if its possibilities of a positing, technical reason are to remain within the boundaries of the power which is the bearer of this opposition.

In conclusion, we can now state what the "Idea of the Good" is and what it does. It is the concept of the making possible of all subjective and objective possibilities, including thinking and the exertion involved in human practice that is conscious and so determined through thinking. That this concept is not a mere product of thought, but rather the ground of all that is, is derivative from the fact that practice (*techne*) which is rationally directed does exist. For such a

practice cannot be thought of as real unless reality in principle corresponds to it.

Certainly practice can miscarry, and clearly *techne* can be harnessed to evil purposes. Possibilities for evil, then, also lie in subject and object. Are they too made possible by the "Idea of the Good"? In that case the name would be a misnomer. If, however, these possibilities turn out to be evil only through the subject, that is to say, through the subject's freedom and not of necessity, then the name is justified. Plato's ontological optimism, linked here with theological optimism, gives him leave to lay upon the subject the burden of the evil actualization of even good or neutral possibilities (380 B).

The existence of possibilities in the first place is good, because the subject can comprehend and actualize them through *techne*. The activity of the subject is an essential moment in the development of the ground of Being that lies beyond Being.<sup>33</sup> Its tendency to develop is presupposed as something good and also as beneficial for the subject; it can be apprehended, though only through effort and in outline, by way of the possibilities in things and in human beings. We have, then, in addition to the real possibilities, which allow a certain leeway as well for what is evil, the possibility of taking one's bear-

<sup>33</sup> J. Habermas' remarks on the Hegelian version of the Idea of the Good (*Theorie und Praxis* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971], pp. 155f), are as wide of the mark as is his talk about the soul modeling itself on the proportions of the universe which it contemplates. The Idea of the Good does not signify a condemnation of subjective activity directed to an end. Its power to determine reality is revealed in the real possibility of subjective positing and rational actualization of ends. To be sure, on its subjective side it is the insight that the subjective posittings do not create their own possibility out of sheer spontaneity, but rather are made possible. On its "objective" side, the Idea of the Good is this making possible, though as the making possible of subjective activity in accordance with goals, it is not merely objective but rather subjective-objective. Without subjective ends, there are no objective ends. These latter can be experienced first as the opposition against which the subjective ends come into conflict; apart from this experience, they lack any meaning. In a brief passage of the *Logic*, Hegel writes what is most likely the profoundest interpretation of the Platonic "Idea of the Good": "the realization of the Good over against another reality which stands opposed to it is the mediation, which is essentially necessary for . . . the realization of the Good" (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Lasson [Leipzig: Meiner, 1934], II, pp. 481f).

The Idea of the Good is in any case "unavoidably fraught with subjectivity," and not only when "it is taken as a directive for purposeful action" (Habermas, *ibid.*). Nevertheless, taken in this way it can, according to Hegel, favor bad subjectivity, the kind which is set against "a reality which in determination is nothing and yet is presupposed to be real" (Hegel, *ibid.*) in a merely postulating and/or technically reconstructing manner. And against this subjectivity which is bad because it loses itself in the infinite progression of mere negation and change (and thereby not yet improvement), and so does not fulfill its own *ergon* as well as the *ergon* of that with which it is concerned, the Idea of the Good becomes normative in a negative way, to be sure, and hence in a critical way. As Habermas puts it, in part correctly, it is directed "against the abstractions which slip in between reason which has become objective, and our subjective consciousness" (*ibid.*). Yet in conformity with the *Idea of the Good* reason has never become simply objective, but resides rather in subjective-objective possibilities of reality. In practical terms, to strive for the Idea of the Good means to perceive, to recognize, and to develop possibilities that have not been posited. In this indirect way, in taking account of being possible, the Idea of the Good becomes a directive for purposeful action; it becomes not one practical norm among many, but rather the principle of all possible practical norms. It would carry us too far afield to inquire whether there are differences as to this question between Plato and Hegel, in whom the axiological component appears to be less pronounced.

ings by the enabling ground of possibilities. Therewith an aspect of the "ought" is revealed which does not stand opposed to reality in a powerless or destructive and self-destructive way, but rather is consistent with its fundamental tendency. In the last resort, possibilities can be evil only because of a subjective deviation from the fundamental tendency, caused by an exaggerated valuation of the possibilities of positing. The fundamental assumptions of Platonic philosophy, which are partly visible, partly implicit, carry us this far. They are the presuppositions of ontological, or rather metaphysical, optimism.

On the whole, this attempt to resolve the difficulty of a distinction between good and evil (beneficial and harmful) possibilities by referring to "making possible" as such (*Ermöglichung überhaupt*) makes good sense. In any event, it has exercised a permanent influence on the course of philosophy right up to Hegel's dictum in the preface of his *Philosophy of Right*: "Whatever is rational is real; and whatever is real is rational."<sup>34</sup> Hegel implies, as did Plato, that irrationality, that is, the evil actualization of possibilities, leads out of what is in fact possible into the utterly unreal. The question is only how the good and rational fundamental tendency of reality can be recognized in a sufficiently concrete way to serve as a practical orientation. Does the subject, in addition to a fundamental directedness toward the "Idea of the Good," require a further, a supernatural and superrational revelation? This answer is also to be found in the tradition. The new attitude, according to which concern with the possibilities of human and non-human nature which cannot be posited is rendered superfluous by supra-natural, societal and historical conventions, is a radical and perilous secularization of the religious solution to the problem of norms.

Eschatological optimism, if it does not take the <risk of the> cessation of life into the bargain,<sup>35</sup> also remains dependent upon the ontological or, rather, metaphysical optimism set forth in Plato's philosophy. Given this optimism as a fundamental point of view, the three realms — Being, Obligation, Thinking — may be brought together. Only if they are related *in their basic nature* is human practice as a rational pursuit possible. Plato's metaphysics (the origin of all metaphysics) draws an inference from the actuality of practice to its possibility, in order to deduce from this standards for the best possible actuality, and to propose an educational system which equips

<sup>34</sup> Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechtes*, ed. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1955), p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Compare R. Maurer, "Die Aktualität der hegelschen Geschichtsphilosophie," in, *Hegel-Bilanz*, ed. Ritter (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1973), pp. 155ff; and "Natur als Problem der Geschichte," in, *Natur und Geschichte*, ed. Hubner/Menne (Hamburg: Meiner, 1973), pp. 125ff.



individuals to make such standards effective in empirical mediation. He has no doubt that training and experience in a definite *techne* are prerequisite to judging what is best in each case. Philosophy, to be sure, is not by itself sufficient. However, if philosophy leads to a fundamental point of view which is in accord with the Idea of the Good, then directions of scientific research (today, for example, ethology and ecology) the aim of which is not a total confrontation of, but harmonious relations between subject and object belong to it.

#### IV. *Techne* and Technique — Ontological and Subjectological Optimism

As we have explicated it, the relation between *techne* and justice, together with Plato's metaphysical foundation of this relation, ought rightly to be a suitable point of departure for the conception of a history of philosophy which would remain true to Whitehead's dictum that Western philosophy consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, a look at the problems created by technology have illuminated philosophy in its interconnectedness with the reality of society. We cannot here trace the route such a history would traverse; we can only, by way of offering a look ahead, point out the contemporary concerns which lie behind such a turning to Plato. Our interest is focused on extricating ourselves from a certain state of perplexity, one both theoretical and practical.

In contrast to ancient *techne* (on the Platonic, metaphysical interpretation), modern *techne* is altogether neutral as to justice or values. It follows that the question concerning the connection of *techne* and justice cannot without more ado be transferred to the connection between technique and justice. As we have here treated the question with reference to Plato, it seems wildly inappropriate to pose it with regard to technique rather than to *techne*. It is clear that technology, as it appears at this time, contains within itself no ethically meaningful measure. The notion that justice is a technique, namely, that technique which provides to everything that which is appropriate to it, and that as such it must inhere in all other techniques — this notion, when brought to bear on modern technique, gives rise to unintelligible postulates. Modern technique lacks any awareness of an *ergon* in its object or of a right that the object has in itself, and most indubitably lacks awareness of an Idea of the Good as the ground of reality; to all appearances it serves, rather, the purposes posited by its subjects, ranging from the individual to the comprehensive subject, society. The question of justice is raised first with regard to the pro-

<sup>36</sup> "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 53.

ducts or other material consequences of technology. Technology causes things to be open to exploitation. The product open to exploitation can then be distributed and utilized justly or unjustly.

The perplexity under consideration results from the fact that the division of labor between technology and morality or politics is not effective if the value-free technique liberated from norms is in this way caught up in an infinite progression of possibilities for exploitation, and if the question concerning justice (that is, the correct application, from the human point of view, of these techniques) or even concerning the quantity of raw materials to be consumed becomes no more than an epiphenomenon of technical control. In light of this danger, which is clearly making itself felt at present, a search for alternatives has begun. Above all, the searcher may be attracted by the thought of retracing the development of the technological world-view, as a traveler might retrace his steps back to the cross-roads on a path which at first seemed easily passable, but which instead turned out to lead into an abyss, in order from there to proceed in a different way. In my opinion, as I have tried to suggest here in a preliminary fashion, the following is a plausible notion: in such a mental re-tracing of one's steps for the purpose of forging ahead on another path,<sup>37</sup> one will not, as Heidegger has it, arrive at the pre-Socratics; rather, it is Plato's philosophy from which alternative paths strike out into the future. In recent history, in fact, one of these paths has been trodden; Heidegger, reflecting on this path in connection with its present perplexities, has tried to expose the metaphysics of the West, which issues from Plato, as a preliminary form of the basic conception of technique which now holds the field.<sup>38</sup>

The preceding interpretation of Plato's *Republic* has shown that such an attack on a metaphysics that seems to be purely theoretical and so has a technically innocent appearance is *in principle* meaningful. Plato's metaphysics is essentially the reflection of a technique pre-given and pre-interpreted in a certain way, such that "technique" (not distinguishing it from *techne*) is the rational development of a human, active relation to the world. Plato launches metaphysical thought in such a way as to make it the clarification of a certain

<sup>37</sup> W. Marx, with Heidegger's re-petition of early thought in mind, writes, "the very first meaning of Being 'grants' — via its terminal form — as well the determinate basic features of other initial possibilities" (*Heidegger und die Tradition* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961], p. 178; see, by the same author, *Die Bestimmung des andersanfänglichen Denkens* [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970], pp. 78ff). According to H. Weinrich, it is the task of the secondary system of sciences, which exist alongside the primary system of possibilities which have already been acted on, "'systematically' to retain in consciousness the rejected possibilities which are negated through the valid primary systems, so that they remain available as a variety pool for necessary changes." ("System, Diskurs, Didaktik und die Diktatur des Sitzfleischs," in, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie, Theorie-Diskussionen* Suppl. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 151.

<sup>38</sup> Compare R. Maurer, *Revolution und 'Kebre.'* *Studien zum Problem gesellschaftlicher Naturbeherrschung*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975), chap. 1.

basic attitude towards oneself and towards other beings and towards the possibility of such relations. It is true that Heidegger interprets Plato's metaphysics as no more than a first step towards the basic technical attitude prevailing today; but our interpretation places this in doubt. The aim of Plato's metaphysics is the relationship to a ground (*arche*) (that is not open to control) of the subjective and objective possibilities which are available to technique; theoretically this presents itself as the Idea of the Good, practically as *ergon*. When this basic view was understood in a metaphysical way, it turned out to be an ontological-meta-ontological optimism, according to which the uncontrollable ground is one that is good for human beings; that is, it makes possible rational activity in accord with *techne* as the development of a recognizable harmony of subjective and objective possibilities.

With this as background, we can now inquire into the fundamental attitude of modern technique as it is set out in a metaphysics or, to put it in a more neutral way, *prima philosophia*, and into its relation to the world which is elaborated into a wide ranging theoretical-practical system. For, to look at matters from a Platonic point of view, if a technology liberated from norms takes on a destructive autonomy, it is evidently not enough to import norms from outside, as Habermas imagines the situation. Like *techne* in the search for its *ergon*, technique has to locate the norms within itself. That this notion should call forth an astonished reaction points to a deeply-rooted inhibition and a fundamental attitude wholly at odds with the ancient way. Only by keeping the older background as a foil can we ask what the different basic attitude is which now governs our relations to the world, and what the *prima philosophia* is which interprets it.

In a summary fashion we have already touched on the modern attitude we are seeking: it tends towards a total confrontation between subject and object (shifting also to the objectification of the subject), between human being and thing;<sup>39</sup> where the point of departure is the infinite priority of the subject. As thing, the object has no *ergon* within itself, no teleology of its own, nor any other right belonging to it. It can acquire a meaning (one that remains external to itself) as property of subjective freedom, or in some other fashion as an object exploitable by such freedom. The subject of such freedom is less the individual than the collective subject, society. Within society the individual can again become an object in the service of collective freedom, that is, a thing to be manipulated pedagogically or in some other way, and all of this leads to a variety of problems in regard to subjective freedom. Nonetheless, the question of how finally

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. chap. 6.



the subject is defined, whether as the individual or as society or as the historical process, has no effect upon the primary determination of freedom as self-production, as absolute coming-forth-itself, as *causa sui*.

If one scans modern philosophy in order to find the most tightly woven elaboration of this confrontation, he will rapidly hit upon Fichte. Think only of the distinction between idealism and dogmatism Fichte draws in the *First Introduction to the Theory of Science* (*Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*). One finds there, for example, these lines:

The dispute between idealists and dogmatists consists really in this, whether the independence of the thing is to be sacrificed to the independence of the I, or, on the contrary, the independence of the I to that of the thing.<sup>40</sup>

Fichte clearly believes this alternative to be necessary and sufficient, and its poles to be contrary. He casts his vote for "idealism," the position of the independence of the "I" as pure action-from-itself. No doubt the notion that the I in its interconnection with things could be independent only on the basis of a certain independence of things beneficial to the I would meet with his rejection as a logically impure compound of "idealism" and "dogmatism."

My thesis, then, is that Fichte's *Theory of Science* is the *prima philosophia* that belongs to the theoretical-practical relation to the world which is called technique, just as Plato's teaching about *ousia* and the ideas belonged to ancient *techne*. Here I can do no more than formulate this thesis in a sketchy way, without supporting it by hermeneutic considerations. If it is correct, then the presuppositions tacitly accepted by modern theory of science become the object of philosophic reflections, and are raised to the level of problems, in Fichte's *Theory of Science*. The modern theory takes science and technique as an unquestioned and self-evident point of departure as the media into which the self-positing subject expands. To this thesis as well we can do no more than allude.

In any event, in Fichte and more openly also in Kant and Hegel we see articulated a fundamental attitude strikingly at variance with that set forth in Plato's metaphysics. Rather than speak of an ontological optimism, which to be sure turned out for Plato to be meta-ontological, one is constrained to call the attitude of the modern writers "subjectological." Where Plato strives to resolve the tension between subject and subject and between subject and object from a ground beyond Beingness, Fichte attempts a solution purely out of the subject. Subjectological optimism as it appears today takes for the most part a sociological shape in which the subject is "society."<sup>41</sup> It asserts the

<sup>40</sup> J. G. Fichte, *Werke*, ed. Medicus, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1962), p. 16.

existence of the self-positing subject, or, rather, that the subject creates itself and its world. However, as Henrich has shown, Fichte is very much aware of the problems created when one attempts to think through the notion of self-production. Thus during the course of his philosophical development Fichte comes to conceive the I no longer as the product of its production, but rather as production or manifestation of its own self-contained ground (*Ich-Grund*), which it does not produce but which produces it.<sup>42</sup> Therewith he arrives at the concept of a trans-subjectivity immanent in the subject, similar to Plato's *ergon* of the soul.

Ideas such as this signify a kind of return to the Platonic metaphysics of the *arche* within the philosophy of subjectivity. The return is possible because at the center of Platonic metaphysics is the ground as Idea and not a concept of substance (*οὐσία*). In this connection it becomes easier to understand Hegel's program, according to which the truth is to be understood not as substance but equally as subject,<sup>43</sup> as a further development of the Platonic approach, especially since Hegel derives the reciprocal relation of substance and subject from a ground to which, following in Plato's footsteps, he at first gave the metaphysical name "Idea," even though later, in keeping with the philosophy of subjectivity, he called it "Mind" (*Geist*). Nonetheless, Idea and Mind do not turn out to contradict each other in the systematic development undertaken by Hegel.

Thus the upshot of our preliminary sketch is the suspicion that an ontological optimism is concealed behind the subjectological optimism. The ontology to which we refer is the one set up by Plato, a teaching in the last resort about the ground of Being beyond Beingness, Beingness which is present in that which exists in the mode of *dynamis* — possibility, capability. Were ontology to be understood as a theory of Being that is its own ground, one would, in speaking about Plato, need to use different terms — meta-ontology or metaphysics. On this view, the self-positing subject exists as little as does substance or matter which has its ground of being within itself; yet both exist in their relation to one another, insofar as the ground makes "it," or rather, them, possible. Even Heidegger, using the locution "es gibt" ("there is," literally, "it gives"), interprets Being, in contradistinction to beings, as that which gives.<sup>44</sup> As here interpreted,

<sup>41</sup> J. Habermas' concept of the "transcendental" in *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1968) is a quite uncritical reflection on the transition of the philosophy of subjectivity to futuristic speculative sociology.

<sup>42</sup> D. Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), esp. pp. 19, 39, 48.

<sup>43</sup> See note 15 above.

<sup>44</sup> M. Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit. Mit einem Brief über den Humanismus* (Bern: Francke, 1947), pp. 80ff; *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), pp. 1ff.

Plato's metaphysics of *arche* is fundamentally similar to Heidegger's thinking about Being.<sup>45</sup> This opens up interesting perspectives on Heidegger's thesis about the end of metaphysics, on which we cannot elaborate now. Our aim has been to grasp the beginning of an active, rational, technological relation to the world in philosophical reflection, as this comes to light in certain problems raised in the course of its development, with the aim of making available from it certain possibilities that have up to now gone unrecognized.

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<sup>45</sup> Within the framework of a different interpretation of Heidegger, G. Rohrmoser arrives at a similar result, namely that Plato's philosophy "is in principle not affected by the thesis of the end of metaphysics." *Nietzsche und das Ende der Emanzipation* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1971), p. 149.



## SELF-PRESERVATION AND INERTIA: ON THE CONSTITUTION OF MODERN RATIONALITY\*

Hans Blumenberg

There are concepts which have the same significance for a historical formation as do key fossils for a geological formation. The concept of self-preservation is of such significance for the early modern period. Already W. Dilthey had emphatically pointed out its central position in the *natural system* of the seventeenth century in his treatise on autonomy and constructive rationalism of 1893.<sup>1</sup> He obscured the view for an authentic understanding, however, with his thesis that it had its derivation in the reception of Stoicism. D. Henrich has illuminated the connection between the concept of self-preservation and the dissolution of Medieval Scholasticism and the destruction of the principle of teleology more clearly in the following short observation:<sup>2</sup>

The drive for self-preservation represents the extreme counterstance to all anthropological teleology. For it is the only subjective impulse toward movement which is by definition not goal directed. It is for psychology the forerunner of Newton's force of inertia (*vis inertiae*), the force which definitively liberated physics from Aristotle's teleology of 'natural places'. The attempts to found ethics which followed in the footsteps of Hobbes are all related to it...

Although the biological-psychological 'drive for self-preservation' is on this thesis said to be a 'forerunner' of the principle of inertia (which means that the organic metaphor of the Stoic tradition remains in force), its incompatibility with Dilthey's account of the her-

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\*Translated from "Selbsterhaltung und Beharrung: Zur Konstitution der neuzeitlichen Rationalität," in, *Subjektivität und Selbsterhaltung*, ed. by Hans Ebeling (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 145-207, under commission of the Franz Steiner Verlag in Wiesbaden.

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Reformation und Renaissance*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig/Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1940), II, 283-92.

<sup>2</sup> Dieter Henrich, "Der Begriff der sittlichen Einsicht und Kants Lehre vom Faktum der Vernunft," in *Die Gegenwart der Griechen im neueren Denken*, ed. Dieter Henrich, et al. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1960), p. 91.

itage of the concept is apparent, for Neostoicism to a great extent introduces and preserves the teleologisms which, according to Henrich's thesis, were eliminated by the concept of self-preservation. R. Spaemann then attempted to set forth in a more thoroughgoing way the concept of self-preservation as the *inversion of teleology*.<sup>3</sup> This inversion, however, turns out to be a mere reduction of the distinction between *actus primus*<sup>i</sup> and *actus secundus*,<sup>ii</sup> which stems from Aristotelian-Scholastic metaphysics. According to this reduction, no longer is it the case that all activity is a secondary intensification of a pre-given existence to its possible perfection, but is an activity exclusively related to this existence as such and pays itself out in its preservation. Preservation is no longer the minimal presupposition for all further determination, *realitas*<sup>iii</sup> no longer the mere condition of *perfectio*.<sup>iv</sup> It is rather the epitome of the possible purposes of everything else, and thus of all actualizations and actions. This reduction thus leads to the formula of Spinoza according to which *realitas* and *perfectio* are one and the same. Campanella, whom Spaemann cites, has even formulated this in terms of traditional ethics: "Conservation is, therefore, the highest good of all things." The 'highest good' is reduced to preservation, but what sort of a preservation is this? Campanella's theory of the love of God affords the answer: this love which merges to become identical with self love, is intended for him, "Who gives us being and conserves and can perpetuate us." It thereby becomes clear that, with all the centralization of the interest of living on the preservation of the self, the achievement of this preservation comes from without and is passively received. *Conservatio*,<sup>v</sup> therefore, still belongs entirely to the Medieval context of contingency. From here one cannot reach Spinoza by means of mere development or enrichment. For him, the love of God is not the condition of preservation, but is rather a manifestation of self-preservation as the quintessence of what the existent already has from itself as its *modus*.<sup>vi</sup> and thus does not even need to bring about.

The conceptual history of 'self-preservation' can be documented in a sufficient manner neither from the reception of Stoicism nor from the reduction of the Aristotelian-Scholastic teleology or doctrine of act. Whenever one sees the conceptual historical process proceed to the *vis inertiae*,<sup>vii</sup> as Henrich has, it is necessary to take into account the merely metaphorical role which the concept of force then plays. Already Newton's first law of motion relates the concept of forces in

<sup>3</sup> Robert Spaemann, *Reflexion und Spontaneität: Studien über Fénelon* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), pp. 53ff. The orientation of Spaemann's essay in the history of ideas is based on his interpretation of Fénelon, whose vocabulary for the range of ideas having the general meaning of preservation includes (besides 'conserve' and especially the intransitive 'persevere') the Scholastic 'inclination,' which meant, in the theory of motion, primarily 'inclination toward rest': "The inclination to be happy is nothing more than a consequence of the inclination which everyone has for the preservation of his life and being."

a purely negative manner to the *perseverare in statu suo*.<sup>viii</sup> It relates positively exclusively to the *statum suum mutare*.<sup>ix</sup> This alone is Spinoza's metaphysical position expressed in terms of physics. It is not only a new rational principle among others, but the principle of modern rationality itself.

Occasionally, second-rate texts can assist in perceiving a state of affairs more sharply because they function as a preparative. I shall make reference to such a text from a later era before returning to the conceptual historical problem of the relation of the reception of antiquity and the destruction of Scholasticism.

# I

The article, "Conservation," in the fourth volume of the French encyclopedia of 1754 was written by Formey. This Frenchman, who was born in Berlin, belongs to those intellectuals of the eighteenth century who organized, or for the first time administrated, science. This most productive figure of the Leibniz-Wolff school forged the plan of a universal lexicon independently of Diderot, but then placed his preparatory work at the disposal of the French enterprise and once again remained content with the plan of translating it. The permanent secretary of the Prussian Academy, the author of the six volume *Belle Wolffienne*<sup>x</sup> whom Rousseau ridiculed in the footnotes to *Émile*,<sup>xi</sup> thus emerges as a co-author of the French encyclopedia. The style of the article "Conservation" is characteristic of the undecided eclectic, who adds a dose of Hume to Leibniz and Wolff, but nonetheless cannot hide his true tendency in his attempted balance of authorities.

The article proceeds in its argumentation from very conventional metaphysical positions and manifests only in its accentuation that its function no longer corresponds to the provenience of its argumentation. The expression *conservation*<sup>xii</sup> is used transitively, not reflexively. Preservation is the primary need of creatures which they, as it were, cannot fulfill themselves. They are in this respect dependent on an act of God.<sup>xiii</sup> "One sees clearly that every creature needs to be conserved." This elementary state of affairs allows for two possible expositions. One of these is the doctrine of continual creation, which for the author is represented by Descartes. The world not only arises from nothing, but must be protected in every moment of its existence against a relapse into nothing. This constant creative activity is compared with human imagination, whose images maintain their existence and presence only as long as the imagination is active and maintains their existence. The comparison excludes the popular conception of a work of art as a continual manifestation of the imagination as an analogy to the creation of the world. That which is



conditioned in the first moment of its existence by the creative act remains so for every succeeding moment of its existence on account of its lack of inner necessity. The indifference of everything actual toward its existence requires that there be an extrinsic foundation for its duration, just as in the model of Aristotle's theory of motion the moved body makes necessary the accompanying causality of the *vis motrix*<sup>xiv</sup> for every moment of the course of motion. Perhaps it appears odd that the Scholastic idea of the *creatio continua*<sup>xv</sup> should here be represented by Descartes. This, however, is eminently characteristic of the dimming out of the entire Medieval background of the modern history of ideas in the eighteenth century. The manner in which Formey treats his material makes clear the methodical necessity of evaluating his choice of authorities in terms of the history of their effects. Descartes thereby becomes for modernity the representative, by and large, of Medieval positions, a fact which comes to light chiefly in the dispute between Cartesianism and Newtonianism in France. This allusion to the effect of Descartes because of this sort of a Medieval element is also informative for the understanding of Spinoza.

In the third Meditation, Descartes, in the course of the self-analysis of human consciousness, begins his proof of the existence of God by finding the concept of a being who cannot ascribe its existence to itself. If this train of thought were concerned with a temporal origin which occurs but once, it would be possible to construct a consciousness which believed that it had always existed and for which the question of its creator could remain unknown because of the lack of a memory of its inception. This objection, which arises from a mere description of the state of consciousness, occasions Descartes to have recourse to the idea of a continual creation, and this, indeed, by means of an atomistic theory of time according to which every moment of an existent relates contingently to that which preceded and that which follows.<sup>4</sup> Reflection on the fact that I have existed in no way implies that I must now exist. For this, rather, it is necessary to adduce a cause which, as it were, creates me anew for this moment. The expression 'preserves me in being' has no other meaning. This consideration turns out to be nothing more than the consequence of the present tense punctuality of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*.<sup>xvi</sup> It says expressly that creation and preservation prove only to be varied aspects of the same thing. That the duration of an object requires the same causality (*vis, actio*)<sup>xvii</sup> as its beginning in time follows from

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<sup>4</sup> René Descartes, *Oeuvres*, ed., Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1947), VII, 38f, or René Descartes, *Works*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), II, 168.

the nature of time. Self-preservation can be consistently ascribed only to a being which is also its own cause, and thus to God. Meditating consciousness finds no trace in itself of a force which, from the certainty that it now exists, can afford it the certainty of existing in the future, that is, no trace of a force of existing through itself.<sup>5</sup>

This consideration serves to assure Descartes of his proof of God's existence and thus of the givenness of the external physical world. Nonetheless, what would be crucial for the future history of the concept of "self-preservation" is at the same time prefigured in him. Namely, he conceives it as independent of the condition of self creation (*causa sui*). In other words, Descartes shows what sort of contradiction to the Scholastic presupposition of a passive preservation of the world, which he still accepts, is possible. One can clearly see that Spinoza remains within this framework and modifies it in a specific direction.

Formey, the pastor of the French Reformed Congregation in Berlin, pursues an entirely different interest in the theory of continual creation which Descartes offers him. For him, the point is theological. It is a systematic expression of the maximum dominion of God over his creatures and of the minimal power of these creatures over themselves. "Of ourselves, we are nothing. God is everything." The extent to which this theological point diverges from a genuinely Christian approach may be expressed as follows. The metaphysics of conservation practically inverts the fundamental eschatological principle. It is not at the end of all history that a cataclysmic act of God toward the world destroys or transforms it. The world is, rather, exposed to annihilation at every moment insofar as it is not protected from this by the explicit interdiction of the divine will. Annihilation is its immanent tendency, preservation the divine reaction. "We require at every moment not merely the simple permission to exist which He gives us, but an efficacious, real, and continual operation which preserves us from annihilation."

Formey, however, does not disguise the disconcerting consequences of this metaphysical position for human self-understanding. He uses some quotations from the articles "Pyrrho," "Paulicians," and "Manicheans" from Pierre Bayle's dictionary with adept forthrightness to show the impossibility of human freedom and self-responsibility, given the presuppositions of the metaphysics of contingency. If every act of the creature, viewed with respect to its possibility, is at the same time an act of the creator — the *concursus* theory thus

<sup>5</sup> Descartes, *Oeuvres* VII. 49; or *Works* II. 169: "...if such a power did reside in me, I should certainly be aware of it." As the *cogito* is nothing other than 'consciousness,' it must be aware of every one of its active possibilities. Thus the entire train of thought starts with the concept of time, without regard to the existence of physical bodies, because time is taken to be a purely 'inner' givenness of consciousness.

turning out to be nothing more than a specification of the thesis of continual creation — then a theodicy would be rendered impossible. This argument is also informative because it accentuates the theological-metaphysical interest rather than the anthropological. Ironically, Formey's article appeared one year before the beginning of the crisis for all attempts at a theodicy wrought by the Lisbon earthquake, and by the literary use Voltaire made of this event.

This interest in the possibility of a theodicy seems to lean toward an alternative position, which appears here under the name of Pierre Poiret (1646-1719). Once again, one should not take it amiss that in this case too, the encyclopedist connects that which he must prove argumentatively with a name which historically was relatively incidental, and which in no way represents the authentic form of the idea. Nevertheless, despite his lack of philosophical originality, this widely read proselyte of the then fashionable feminine mysticism (Antoinette Bourignon, Jeanne Marie Guyon) was one of the most influential opponents of Cartesianism. He imputes a rational economy to the divine will in a very distinctive manner in his often translated seven volume *Divine Economy* (1687), and this is what Formey takes up. God bestowed upon his creatures at creation the capacity to continue their existence by themselves. Thus, their conditionedness consists only in the fact that God vouchsafes to them their existence and does not execute the eschatological act of recalling it. The conservation of the world is the postponement of the act of annihilation, which is symmetrically coordinated to that of creation.

Even this position has its theological point. Namely, it is better suited to the maintenance of the premises of infinite power than is a constantly exercised dominion in the form of conservation. For once the metaphysical argument of contingency has been introduced, by means of which the incapacity of the finite to preserve its existence is derived from its essential structure, the creative power, viewed in respect to this conclusion, appears equally limited. For it is denied the capacity of bringing forth beings which, of themselves, continue to exist, and thus preserve themselves. This limitation of omnipotence would only be permissible if the concept of self-preserving created being contained a contradiction. Here Formey makes clear the connection of this point with the theodicy problematic which is his main concern. The postulate of the perfection of creation requires that creatures are provided with a *force permanente*<sup>xviii</sup> which stabilizes the first moment of their elevation from nothing such that it requires an overt action of recall to set an end to the world.

The simile of the clockwork, which accompanies the history of modern thought in the most diverse forms for the most diverse purposes, is here brought forth: "The world is a clock which, having once been wound up, continues to run until God decides to let it run



down." Despite the clockwork metaphor — and without the author appearing to be aware of a contradiction — the decisive advantage of this position is supposed to be its consistency with human freedom: "Human freedom is nowhere better established than in this opinion" The possibility of a theodicy is also maintained in this respect. God is responsible for the first moment of creation only, for its genuine quality. Man is responsible for the rest of its history. Formey thus appears to return to the beginning of the tradition of Christian theodicy in Augustine's *On Free Will* where human freedom, as it were, seems to be the lesser evil in relation to the Gnostic consequences of a double absolute principle of the world.

The accent has, however, unmistakably shifted, for in Formey's article it lies in the displacement of the divine by human responsibility for the world, in the sense of human dignity as the self-responsibility which thereby accrues to man. Man is indeed still guilty of the evils of the world. Yet he is nonetheless a creative being on his own, primarily after, and on account of, the fact that divine creation occurs but once. "He is the creator of his actions." It is Formey's clear intention to bracket together theodicy and anthropology, to fuse the apology for God in respect to moral evil with the apotheosis of man in regard to his position toward the world. "Man does all," stands directly opposed to the, "God is all," in the representation of the Cartesian position as its consequences. If, at the beginning of the history of the relation between theodicy and human freedom, Augustine was exclusively interested in justifying the physical evil of the world with the aid of the moral evil of man, and therewith in exonerating God, responsibility for evil is now, as it were, the unavoidable price for man's being permitted to hold himself accountable for the good he effects in the world through his actions.

It follows from the paragraph which the encyclopedist devotes to these difficulties that he saw this consequence, but did not sanction it without reservation. Poiret's conception (as it is presented in the article) magnifies the power of creation at the origin of the world beyond all measure. At the same time, however, it makes almost entirely meaningless divine providence as relevance of the diety which accompanies the course of the world and makes claims upon a humanity concerned with its welfare. Now the diety functions only by abstention — and by postponing the destruction of the world, and thereby releasing its immanent history. "All He has to do is not destroy them." The God of this 'economy' finds himself completely at ease on the day after creation. He breaks his rest only when he wishes to draw man's attention to himself by means of an extraordinary miracle. This thought appears strange in the middle of the *Encyclopaedia*, the foremost instrument of the Enlightenment, for which miracles were one of the most intense irritations. Its mention here, how-

ever, has a purely argumentative function. Retaining the possibility of miracles means, at the same time, that the continued existence of the world cannot be a miracle. The possibility of the extraordinary requires a foundation in the ordinary. There lies a concession in the provision for miracles which must be made as long as the abyss of nothingness between creation and the end of the world should appear to be merely bridged over. Edification by the extreme thought of a remote beginning and end of the world and of occasional interference by the deity for private reasons may have appeared to the author, as well as to the reader, to be a small price to pay for having offset the terrible insecurity which the world would suffer in every moment as a result of the notion of continual creation by a firm, but not all too daring, conception of the self-preservation of the world as an original gift by omnipotence. The risk of the *Encyclopédie* was precisely that it was designed to attract the greatest possible public and to and around itself while manifesting hardly any pervasive idea of the heterogeneity of that public, of its capacity to assimilate, or of what was beneficial to it.

The editors added an appendix to Formey's article which, in an ironical and acquiescing way, settled accounts with the result of the metaphysical endeavors which unfold antithetically therein. It states that, after having made all sorts of detours, one finds himself right back at the point of departure where he could have remained and should have been content. This irony probably refers chiefly to Formey's method of presentation. He follows the model of the tropes of the sceptics; in spite of underlining what is more agreeable to him, he leaves both antinomical conceptions unresolved as well as undecided. The intolerability of the thought that man is preserved in being loses, in this manner of presentation, the importance which it would have to have within the framework of the *Encyclopédie*. Its interest is, to a large measure, to further the efforts of man *to preserve himself in being*. An article representative of this is "Culture des Terres," which is signed by the editors. Here the idea of self-preservation is placed expressly at the beginning as the principle of deduction of the natural order of human conduct in the world: "In each individual, the idea of conservation is immediately attached to that of his existence . . ."

An additional article, which is prefaced with an asterisk indicating that its source is Diderot, treats the term conservation from a moral perspective. It is surprising how little he refers to deductions from this principle carried out after Hobbes and Spinoza. In this article the law of preservation is one of the fundamental laws of nature because its cancellation or transgression necessarily leads to the negligibility of all the others. The law of preservation thus stands in the same relation to other natural laws as does the existence of an object

to the rest of its qualities. The latter are possible only under the presupposition of the former: "... it is, in relation to other laws, what existence is to other qualities." Translated into morality, this law of nature means that everyone should preserve his existence as long as possible — for himself, his friends, his relatives, for society and the human species. This extension by means of a 'for' allows for a previously undisclosed teleological interpretation of the duty of self-preservation. The notion of right enters into those of the above mentioned relations which man would trample into the ground by violating the law of self-preservation. Insofar as those ties which place an obligation on us are not given by nature, they are freely chosen and taken on. It is no longer up to us to dissolve them without the consent of those affected apart from committing an injustice. This thought falls short of the unsatisfactory teleological exposition of natural law, although the contractually construed reciprocity lacks the moment of naked rationality in the sense of Hobbes' contract of submission. The source of the obligation to keep even unexpressed contracts perhaps comes nearest to being revealed at the end of the article in the reference to the traditional ideal of the 'honest man.' In any case, preserving oneself is not only a *possibility* inherent in all beings. For those who are capable of contradicting it, it is even a command. From this results the supreme principle of all actions, that they must be uniformly related to self-preservation, and to the preservation of others (which latter is, once again, added): "Act such that all your actions tend toward the conservation of yourself and toward that of others. That is the cry of nature. But above all be an honest man."

## II

Despite his certainly tendentious indecision, and in spite of his consideration of the concept of preservation within a theological framework, Formey's *Encyclopedia* article brings the ambiguity of conservation as an exogenous and endogenous 'activity' unmistakably to the fore. It becomes especially clear that conservation in the endogenous sense is intended to be a counter concept to conservation in the exogenous sense. In fact, to insist upon the expression *conservatio* is already characteristic of an antithetical concept formation. Spinoza as well as Newton uses the more suitable (regarded in itself) term *perseverare*,<sup>xix</sup> which still remains useful in the most general formulation of the principle of inertia: "The effect of every cause persists." Newton uses the expression in his third definition in order to characterize the power of resisting (continuing in its present state) which is attributed to matter, and in the elaboration of the fourth definition of the impressed force: "For a body maintains every



new state it acquires by inertia only." Spinoza links the expression *perseverare* with the concept of *conatus*,<sup>xxx</sup> a concept which presents no fewer difficulties than that of force. The expression conservation, as opposed to perseverance, afforded the possibility of precisely delimiting the range of importance of a position which was opposed to an essential element of tradition. The thesis here advanced, which has been illuminated by means of the *Encyclopedia* article as a preparative, opposes the concept of conservation of oneself to the tradition of conservation in a transitive sense in its extreme form of continual creation, or, basically, to the entire Scholastic conception of contingency. Dilthey's central thesis as to the Stoic origin of the concept of self-preservation is therewith placed in question. It is, in fact, restricted to certain references to the arsenal of ancient formulations and to orienting metaphors of an organic sort. Such use of ancient materials by and large determines the level of expression in which the alternative to the Scholastic system of contingency is articulated. We must not confuse this historical phenomenon with what is often called 'influence' and which, when used as a historical category, is supposed to *explain* not only the form of expression but also the content of an actuality. There was, however, no place in the thought of antiquity for a concept of self-preservation in the definition which could first be occasioned by the problem left over by the Scholastic system.

The Middle Ages left behind a question of which antiquity was unaware. The Middle Ages put the question — in all truth brought it forth — because it believed that it had the answer to it. The answer created the need for the problem. The answer was the extravagant claim of a constant, inward, and most radical dependence of the world on God. He is not only its once and for all creator, its regent and administrator. He must also be its 'preserver' in the strictest sense. The concepts of continual creation and divine concursion, peculiar to the Middle Ages, arose from a consistent conformity to this answer. In the face of the entire stock of ideas which it had received from ancient metaphysics, the Middle Ages forced itself to conceive of nothing, or the void (*nihil*), almost as the normal metaphysical state of affairs and to think of the creation from nothing as a miracle continually effected against this normality. This return from the abyss of contingency could not bring about a restoration of ancient indubitability. The new answer to the question (which itself had since been radicalized) had to be even more radical in the sense of assuring its rationality. The material which the reception of Stoicism offered did not meet this need.

In the course of the resumption of the Stoic tradition by Vives, Telesio, Giordano Bruno, and Justus Lipsius, two elements merge beyond doubt. The first is the organic interpretation of self-preser-

vation as an integral system of behavior of living beings, including the cosmic world animal. In this connection, there is the need to speak of 'forces,' or even to equate nature with *vires se conservandi*,<sup>xxi</sup> as does Campanella. Thus one can say that life is the complement of functions which hinder death. The second is the association of self-preservation with a theory of affects the root of which is self-conservation, which becomes constancy when transformed into an ethic.<sup>6</sup> No doubts can be brought against evidence found by Dilthey of Stoic ingredients in Spinoza, which Telesio and Dutch schools of philology bequeathed to him. But these aids in formulation do not create the slightest compulsion to grasp the fundamental idea more rigorously or to subject it to further rationalization.

Hobbes partially affords an example of this, namely in regard to the concept of the state. The passage beyond the state of nature in the contract of submission no longer admits of comparison with an act of self-preservation on impulse. It is rather the result of a formal determination of reason by means of consistency. It is rational behavior as an act which must not come into conflict with the preservation of mere existence, existence being a condition of acting. The state of nature must already bear the mark of the concept of right, namely of the right of all men to all things, in order to be able to demonstrate this. Here, preservation is the central concept which bestows consistency upon a theory, and not the supposition of a drive, which permits the different modes of behavior to be derived from a primary energy. Self-preservation is not the organic unity of human existence which utilizes reason as an instrument of subsistence. It is rather the rational norm of a process. Thus the rational concept of a right cannot be of the sort which would allow for the cancellation of the possibility for rights in general. A system of right must admit of being constituted durably, and this is just what the state of nature inhibits.

This association of the principle of self-preservation with that of non-contradiction may have a weak inception with Zeno, according to our historical knowledge. There is no inkling of this in the reception of Stoicism of the sixteenth century which was stimulated and dominated chiefly by Cicero. Neither Vives and Telesio nor Giordano Bruno passed beyond the fundamental organic idea of self-

<sup>6</sup> Whoever would find a seminal foreshadowing of the foundations of science anywhere in antiquity must unavoidably refer at the same time, or rather primarily, to an early form of a principle of conservation; on this depends, in Kant's words, "the possibility of authentic science." A striking example of this is P. Natorp's attempt to interpret Plato's concept of the Good as the equivalent of an *idea of conservation* from which he primarily derives his understanding of the concept of cosmos in the *Phaedo*:

"The notion of a world order implies the preservation of a basic cosmic structure . . . each particular must be ordered, that is, it must so preserve itself as is required for the self-preservation of the whole, which is accomplished by means of its own systematic ordering." (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1903), p. 148.

preservation to a formal conception. Even if the term 'self-preservation' characterizes above all the relation of the parts to the whole as a tendency toward constant integration and reintegration, and the still uncomprehended force of attraction of greater masses for the lesser, which are thereby organized into an organic schema, as with Giordano Bruno,<sup>7</sup> this is no beginning of a construction of the universe through reason.<sup>8</sup>

Even Francis Bacon, whom one could most easily view as a sort of transition from Giordano Bruno to Hobbes, does not succeed at a rational construction. His theory of motion remains determined by teleological presuppositions in spite of his polemics against Aristotelian finality. He indeed relinquishes the 'natural motion' to a natural place, because places in space exist in thought alone. Real effects thus may not be attributed to them. Motion toward a natural place, however, is replaced by the principle of the self-preservation of the greater masses, by means of their unification with the fragmentary masses which are separated from them.<sup>9</sup> Transitive Scholastic conservation thus has the aftereffect that preservation is primarily of the whole and exists for the parts only in a secondary and, as it were, auxiliary manner. This *motus congregationis maioris*<sup>xxii</sup> is not the 'effect' of greater masses. It is rather the aspiration of smaller masses to the larger 'in the interest' of their self-preservation.<sup>10</sup> The *consensus mundi*<sup>xxiii</sup> is the principle of the explanation of motion. It is primarily a Stoic term, which Bacon explicitly rejects as a criterion of truth, but retains here as a metaphor of a physical state of affairs. The composition of a body is likewise conceived as a relation of power of some parts over others, and the motion of subjection which obeys this ordering power as a political motion.<sup>11</sup> The metaphoric potential of the Stoic self-preservation is first fully realized in Bacon's specific affinity for an organic, as well as a political-juridical, linguistic orientation.

The question of what authentically Stoic ideas entered into the

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Hans Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), pp. 561ff.

<sup>8</sup> Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* II. 283.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Bacon, *Works*, ed. James Spedding, et al. (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1864), I. 511. Hereinafter cited as *Works*: Latin. Or, Bacon, *Works*, trans. Basil Montague (Philadelphia, Pa.: Parry and Macmillan, 1959), III. 417. Hereinafter cited as *Works*: English. "It is by this motion that the earth stands of its own weight, whilst its extremes move towards the middle, not to an imaginary center, but in order to unite."

<sup>10</sup> Bacon, *Works*: Latin, 403; or English, 415: "...in the nine preceding motions, bodies appear to aim at the mere preservation of their nature..."

<sup>11</sup> Bacon, *Works*: Latin, 408; or English, 416: "...by which the predominant and governing parts of any body check, subdue, reduce, and regulate the others and force them to unite, separate, stand still, move, or assume a certain position, not from any inclination of their own, but according to a certain order."



stream of tradition inescapably arises here. The premise of the Stoic conception of self-preservation is that it is an activity, a process. A dynamic structure takes the place of the static constancy of Aristotle's essential forms. The composition and solidity of a physical body rest upon a circulation of *pneuma*<sup>xxxiv</sup> which binds the body together. Not only organisms, but also stones and wood are held together as by fetters by means of this most rare element circulating in them, which, extending from the center, encircles the surface and leads back again to the center. In this respect, every single thing in nature is an image of the cosmos.<sup>12</sup> The cosmic *tonos*<sup>xxxv</sup> is a sort of exertion of the cosmos against the surrounding void (*kenon*), as it were, so that it does not dissolve or flow into the latter. This important alteration of Aristotle's cosmology (which allowed for no empty space beyond the last sphere) raises for the first time the problem of the self-preservation of the universe in general and is probably also assumed in Epicurus' physics in regard to the decay of worlds. Seeing that the Stoics share the Platonic premise (*Sophist* 247-E) that all determinations of a being must be conceived either as actors or as passions, self-preservation must be an activity if it is to be a pervasive characteristic of all physical entities.

Matter, however, no longer plays a merely passive part in this disjunction. For the dualism of reason and necessity, of *nous* and *hyle*,<sup>xxxvi</sup> has been abandoned, and *logos* was considered to be distinguishable from *hyle*.<sup>13</sup> The result is that the elementary drive for self-preservation, which had been borrowed from the organic, had to be recalled back into the substrate of matter. This would be a possible point of departure for Spinoza's identification of reality and perfection. It is not, however, taken up as a rational determination except in the ninth book of Telesios' *De Rerum Naturae*<sup>xxxvii</sup> in the doctrine of the general affection of self-preservation as the most universal determination of man, living beings, and matter.

Stoic cosmology retains Aristotle's conception in an essential part of its doctrine, namely in the physical distinguishing of the center of the world. A centralization of all world processes toward this center is clearly assumed under the pressure of Epicurean theses. Self-preservation is expounded as a continual 'turning inward' of the cosmos, which manifests itself phenomenally in the fact that falling is the primal natural motion.<sup>14</sup> The whole preserves itself by constantly 'assimilating' its parts. Its duration is no longer eternal, as it was for Aristotle, but is rather an immanent and self-consuming 'accom-

<sup>12</sup> *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. Hans Friedrich August von Arnim (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1964), II, 458 and I, 497.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 307.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 550.

plishment' of this whole itself. It is embodied in the all-penetrating element of fire which both constitutes the structure of the world (*Weltgestalt*) and consumes it again in its degenerate form. The Aristotelian model of cosmic motion by the unmoved mover is maintained, but inverted toward immanence in the diagram. The center is unmoved. It moves everything else, in that, as the punctual goal of all motion, it allows no room for anything moved. It is rather merely an imaginary passage of the whole to itself. What it means to conceive the cosmos as a living being, as a great animal, is illustrated in this model of circulation (which basically must be the equivalent of the phenomenon of gravitation). The center of the world as the point most removed from the infinite empty space, the mere nothing, is at the same time the focal point of self-preservation, of the most extreme condensation and security. The whole endures by constantly enacting this relation to its center dynamically.<sup>15</sup>

The question then becomes, what is the relation of this cosmology to Stoic ethics. This question strikes at the heart of the early modern conceptual history of self-preservation. For here it looks as though ethics and politics became paradigmatic for the physical principle of inertia insofar as they took up the principle of self-preservation. Right from the start Zeno, the founder of the school, propounded the wholly abstract fundamental principle of the ethic of 'living in agreement.' From the perspective of the later development of Stoic ethics this formula appears to be a retrenchment, indeed, of the concept of nature which was so essential for the tradition. For 'to live in agreement' means simply 'to live in accord with nature.' This is, however, by no means obviously the genuine interpretation of Zeno's formula, which can assume the purely formal meaning of agreement with oneself, even if one, as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff does, rejects any individualistic meaning of the type which Schiller expresses through the mouth of Countess Terzky:<sup>16</sup> "every character who agrees with himself is right." The older, more abstract formula is really a principle of self-preservation as the possible constancy of the will in respect to that which is its own presupposition. That this could be here interpreted as a specific 'nature,' or as the adaptation to *nature*<sup>xxxviii</sup> — that agreement should have to take its inception (to which it progressively returns) from an authentic endowment which becomes visible in early childhood — need not falsify its formal moment. For all of that, the intended harmonization with the parapatetic 'life in accord with nature' has in this case laid down for tradition an affinity which would not be

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., II. 554, 549.

<sup>16</sup> Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1955), II, p. 291.

dissolved again.

Seneca's dictum of "always willing or not willing the same things"<sup>17</sup> may have been the peculiarly positive link to that which reappears in Descartes' provisional morals. He illustrates it in the simile of the hiker lost in the forest, whose only recourse is to proceed in a straight line once he has taken a certain direction. He can thus take advantage of the fact that all forests are finite.<sup>18</sup> But this formal determination of resolution which arises in a factual context is only a makeshift for Descartes' provisional morality, which will be definitely surpassed when 'appropriate action,' brought into evidence by a complete physics, will guarantee the most secure and highest yield of self-preservation and fulfillment. The Stoic concept of nature, by way of contrast, had given the demand for agreement a teleological basis, as the doctrine of the *prote oikeiosis*<sup>xxix</sup> of the child indicates. The original disposition of drives (*proto horne*<sup>xxx</sup>) provides the ethical norm of a conduct which is capable of an inner stability, and thus is capable of preserving itself. Whatever Zeno may have meant, and whatever is indicated by the use of a purely logical expression (namely of *machomenos zen*<sup>xxxi</sup>), for the opposite of this ideal, has, in any case, been suppressed and concealed in the tradition and reception of Stoicism by the preponderance of its concept of nature, with its presumably ever realizable content. The secondary formula, which has already been interpreted, has covered over the primary findings. What ought to be the consequence of beginning from an unfeigned naturalness is forced into a sort of constant paralleling of nature by the extended ideal. It is therewith committed to a constantly renewed heteronomous inquiry. The return to self-preservation as the root of the entire doctrine of affects is an attempt to reduce the principle of agreement with nature to an economic minimum. This confers at the same time the advantage of avoiding the principle of pleasure in the constant struggle with Epicureanism. But it is just this economic minimum which does not follow an exact determination of its lin-

<sup>17</sup> Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, trans. and edited by Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), I. 134, 135, Ep. 20. The twentieth letter to Lucilius clearly manifests what distinguishes a formal conception of 'living in agreement' (*homologoumenos zen*) from any ethic of 'life in accord with nature,' hence Zeno from Chrysippus and all later formulations. Nevertheless Seneca's ethic of the 'one rule,' the principle that 'all actions be of one color,' that 'a man be like himself under all conditions and always be the same man' lacks an element of rationality essential for going beyond the positive. Anticipating from his correspondent the objection that what must be pertinaciously kept to must also be right, he replies that this 'little restriction' is not at all necessary, for only that which is just could ever be pleasing: "...since no man can always be pleased with the same thing, unless it is right." Seneca here stands on the brink (but only on the brink) of inverting the commandment of agreement in such a way that the possibility of 'always willing the same thing' becomes for the individual the criterion of testing whatever is willed, just as, in the case of Hobbes, the possibility of asserting natural right becomes the criterion for the necessity of civil right.

<sup>18</sup> Descartes, *Oeuvres*, VI. 24-25; and *Works* I. 96. (*Discours de la Méthode*, III. 3.)



eage, namely from the description of modes of conduct and actions.

If the problem of the reception of Stoicism is regarded from the perspective of the efficacy of its sources and the catchiness of its slogans, then Cicero is the most important point of reference (*Anbalt*) for what could have influenced the beginnings of modernity. It is significant that the high regard in which Cicero is held is intimately bound up with the critique of Scholasticism and its connection with Aristotle. With Cicero it becomes apparent that self-preservation was chiefly a negative comparative to all eudaimonistic and hedonistic approaches to ethics for the academic systems of Hellenistic philosophies. It is, as it were, an attempt to make room for, and grant preeminence to, an unfolding of the catalogue of virtues by means of an economy of the principle of the physical self-manifestation of necessity. The primal constitution of nature is earmarked from the start for anthropology with, characteristically, an additional voluntaristic element: "Every natural organism aims at being its own preserver so as to secure its own safety and also its preservation true to its own specific type."<sup>19</sup> The Stoic principle of self-preservation as one of will embraces not only the individual, but also the species. It agrees therein with the Aristotelian dictum of the constancy of essential forms. But it is clear from this very generative component that the mention of willing is here not accidental. For self-preservation is understood as an activity, as a process determined by a goal. The discussion of the Stoic Cato, as he speaks within Cicero's work, consequently proceeds immediately from the will to the means, from nature to art, and on to the *vivendi ars*<sup>xxxiii</sup> as the purport of the assistance to be rendered to nature. This purport is split into two specifications according to the dualism of spirit and body. Not much time is lost on the art of bodily self-preservation. He rather proceeds to the arts of spiritual preservation, which turn out to be the traditional catalogue of virtues. Nature affords at least the principle of deduction for that which, for its part, is no longer natural. Everything artificial, everything determinable by the will is referred to the end which nature by and large pursues.<sup>20</sup>

Even when Cicero attempts to correct or surpass the Stoic and Epicurean points of view through the system of his teacher, Antiochus of Ascalon, he always refers to the fundamental command of nature as it is represented in a living being which is still young to the primal appetite of self-preservation. But once again even this is formulated in such a way that the affect of self-love is not the manifestation of a

<sup>19</sup> M. Tullius Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* IV. 7 and 16, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 318-19.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-21 (IV. 8, 19).

principle of preservation of the entire cosmos at the level of living being, but is rather the elementary state of affairs from which acts of self-preservation are innervated:

Every living creature loves itself, and from the moment of birth tries to secure its own preservation because the earliest impulse bestowed on it by nature for its lifelong protection is the instinct for self-preservation and for the maintenance of itself in the best condition possible to it in accordance with its nature.<sup>21</sup>

The drive for self-preservation can indeed be the expression of a reason which governs nature. It cannot, on its own part, be reason, because it crops up in its purest form where it does not yet understand or comprehend itself.

The difference between Stoicism and Hobbes is clearest here. Self-preservation as a drive leads to a situation in which the constant exercise of all natural rights becomes itself inimical to preservation. As reason, it transfers these rights [to the world organism] as a whole in order to regain them to the degree permitted by the legislative will. The formula which Cicero puts into the mouth of M. Porcius Cato is most reminiscent of Zeno's abstract formulation of the Stoic principle of unanimity. It alludes to the, "attachment for itself and an impulse to preserve itself," of the animal, a formula to which, however, a discussion of instrumentality is immediately appended, namely of the conservation of its present state.<sup>22</sup>

Stoicism basically has not abandoned the Aristotelian position of eidetic constancy, although it puts the question more expressly and has reduced it to standard formulae. It has merely extended it to the entire cosmos with the aid of the metaphor of the world organism: "The universe keeps the same character, the same limits."<sup>23</sup> It is the presupposition of a fixed, as it were, canonical pattern which associates the idea of preservation with the Stoic logos of the world.

### III

The Middle Ages took up the problem of preservation from an entirely different aspect. The problem was not the reliability of the world, of the cosmos which maintained itself in the fact of empty space or hyletic chaos. It was rather a tenacious insistence on the utter dependency of the world on its creator, the generalization of the moment of creation from nothing into a constant indigence of the world in regard to its preservation. That this thought does not fall

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 416-17 (V. 9, 24).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 232-33 (III. 5c, 16).

<sup>23</sup> Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 79. 8. 204, 205.

within the context of the Biblical concept of creation, which is a preliminary to history rather than a cosmological metaphysics, does not need to be stated. The Middle Ages found a radical exposition of the thought of creation for the first time in the concept of contingency. This idea is one of the few of a genuine Christian stamp in the history of metaphysics, although it originated in the Latinization of Aristotelian logic. Contingency characterizes the constitution of a world created from nothing and destined to destruction, which is maintained in its existence by the divine will as measured against the idea of an unconditioned and necessary being. Aristotelian metaphysics took up the fundamental opposition of possibility and actuality, but not that of possibility and necessity, from the theory of modality. Aristotle's mover god is sufficiently characterized as pure actuality (*actus purus*). Necessity accrues to him only in the course of a regressive consideration of him as the principle of the world process. He is no *ens necessarium*,<sup>xxxiii</sup> and is in no sense a *causa sui*.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

If one reflects upon how High Scholasticism considered it systematically possible to interpret the theological doctrine of creation in terms of Aristotle's theory of motion and to grasp the connection between creator and created according to the principle of, "Whatever is moved must be moved by another," then the dependence of the concept of contingency on this axiom becomes immediately intelligible. This Aristotelian-Scholastic proposition, the physical import of which amounts to an assertion of an accompanying cause of motion, can be formulated as the fundamental principle of the extrinsic preservation of the world: Every moment of the motion requires a special moving causality. One must consider in what systematic order this principle of motion serves the needs of Scholasticism. Above all, it allows for a concept of God adapted to the Scholastic needs of proof. The unmoved mover can be proven to exist under the presupposition of the principle of motion of accompanying causality according to the model of the twelfth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. But the great difficulty is how to provide a concept of God characterized by this function with the additional attribute of the creation of the world.

The first unmoved mover of Aristotle implied a world which had always existed, or at least a pregiven matter. The Aristotelian efficient cause induces a world substrate to be this (*ad esse hoc*) but not simply to be (*ad esse simpliciter*).<sup>24</sup> That this is the case, however, is, according to the obvious imputation of Thomas of Aquinas, not owing to the effective cause, but rather to the assumption of the pre-

<sup>24</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II. 6. (Rome: Marietti Edition, 1961), 118; or *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa contra Gentiles*, II., trans. James F. Anderson (Garden City, N. Y.: Image Books, 1956), 36. Hereinafter referred to as *Summa contra Gentiles* (Latin) and (English).



given material substrate. If one imagines this substrate reduced to zero, then the efficient cause becomes *eo ipso* the creative, and the efficient cause is the basis of the world not only in its act, but also in its potency. Creation would thus be an act of the unmoved mover for whom what is to be moved does not yet exist. It must rather be brought forth in the act of moving as its necessary condition. This is not the place to expose the fallaciousness of this train of thought, given the presuppositions of the Aristotelian-Scholastic system. In an Aristotelian sense, to move means at most to make something from matter, but not to produce a thing in its being in the sense of the radical *ex nihilo*.<sup>25</sup> The explanation which he places at the end of this intellectual operation, that, "Creation is not a motion," alters little if the entire process of argumentation rests on the premise that creation is a sort of threshold value of the causality of motion. Here it is important that this concept of motion (which represents an indispensable predicate of the actuality of the world) is the vehicle for the execution of the idea of contingency, and therewith of the thesis of the impossibility of the self-preservation of a being at any moment of its existence.

Scholasticism unequivocally goes beyond Aristotle in its use of the expression 'motion,' which he had allowed only for the three categories of quantity, quality, and place and expressly had excluded from the first category, substance. He considered therewith the generation of a being as such and in respect to its essential determination to be incomprehensible in terms of the schema of 'motion.' Transcending this limit necessarily raised the problem of conservation and forced it into the conception of mover and moved. The modest claims which Aristotle had made for the proof of his fundamental principle of motion through another<sup>26</sup> were thereby greatly enlarged. Aristotle was not yet able to rely on the same 'evidence' from language which the unequivocity of the passive *moveri*<sup>xxxv</sup> created for the Scholastics out of the ambiguity of the Greek middle passive *kineisthai*. The latter could limit themselves to an analysis which was supposedly based on concepts in order to prove that every being which is moved (*moveri*) requires a mover (*move*).<sup>27</sup> If 'motion' in its extended meaning of 'alteration' may, in the final analysis, also entail that something can come from nothing, or else that there can be something instead of nothing, then its connection with the *theologumena* of creation as something produced is in this rendering

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., II, 16 arg. 3-4: (Latin), 118 or (English) 124.

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, *Physics* VII:1 and VIII:4 trans. Rev. P. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934), 206-07.

<sup>27</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I q. 2 a. 3. trans. Timothy McDermott, O. P., additional appendices by Thomas Gilby, O. P. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) II. 12f.

plausible. Now Aristotle's concept of nature afforded a pressing reason for considering the exogeneity of 'motion' with care. For with him, *physis*<sup>xxxvi</sup> was its principle (*arche*), and the Scholastics *did* understand the expression *principium* in the Latin translations in the genuine sense that 'motion' could be a consequence of this nature. The first mover, however, was not supposed to be this nature, but the creator (*generans*) thereof. Here a considerable danger obviously threatened the fundamental concept and its functional uses. For every natural (as opposed to violent) motion has its principle in the nature (*forma*) [of the moved], just as with the 'heavy' and 'light' bodies of Aristotle's physics: "For although simple forms are not movers, they are nonetheless principles of motions, since natural motions are resultant from them, as are all other natural properties."<sup>28</sup> The debate over whether the heavens can be moved by the force of their nature bears a relation to this. Thomas denies it, for every natural motion must have rest as its end. It is thus impossible for motion for its own sake to be brought forth by nature, as it were, as the end.<sup>29</sup> That the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are continuous and 'aimless' motions is opposed to their subsumption under the concept of 'nature' as the principle of motion: "Therefore, the principle of celestial motion is not simply the nature of the body."<sup>xxxvii</sup> The introduction of intellectual movers of spheres is thereby justified, and finally the entire system of cosmic motors which culminates in the unmoved mover. The entire difficulty of conceiving the preservation of the state of motion with the means afforded by this system becomes perceptible in this connection. For every 'motion' is, as it were, instrumental, a means to an end, and the way to a goal. What cannot be justified by recourse to an attained or attainable state of rest cannot be explained, at least not in terms of its 'nature.' While the heavenly bodies are indifferent to every *ubi*,<sup>xxxviii</sup> all natural motions are terminated after a finite distance by reaching their natural place. But the question as to whether they are moved by their nature alone arises even for the natural motions of heavy and light objects. If Averroes had answered the question by saying that the elementary disposition to move toward the natural place was the 'mover,' for Thomas the source of motion was the *generans*,<sup>xxxix</sup> thus the creator, who here bears the term otherwise reserved for the Trinity: "... they are moved *per se* by the generator which makes them heavy and light."<sup>30</sup> Thus cosmology has here usurped what Aristotelianism regarded as pertaining only to organic

<sup>28</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* III, 23, argument 4: (Latin) III. 28, 04 (English) III, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Garden City, N. Y.: Image Books, 1956), 90.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 23, argument 5 (Latin) III. 29; or (English) III. 90. "So it is impossible for a nature to tend toward motion for the sake of motion."

generation. It is a Christianization which clearly deviates from Aristotle, and which is meant to retrace natural motions to the context of creation. The entire problem of preservation finally comes to the fore when God, by positing the natures of things as their principles of 'motion,' also determines their behavior for which he gives as well as preserves *virtus*<sup>31</sup> ("...also continually as upholding its [the force's] very being").<sup>32</sup> The idea of natural motion reduces the function of the mover to generation. As such it bestows upon that which is moved by nature its inner principle alone, from which the consequence of 'motion' follows. Thomas, however, once again leaps over this restriction with agility in order to remove the causality both of creation and preservation from its dangerous proximity to the organic metaphor of creation. God is "...the cause of the power bestowed, not only like the generator in its becoming, but also in its being; and thus God may be said to be the cause of an action by both causing it and upholding the natural power of its being." *conservat* as though this were but a minor modification, a logical equivalent. The relation of nature, virtue, and act of nature is, however, overdetermined as a consequence, and immanent causality is deformed into transcendent causality. Aristotle, it is true, was to become the focal point of the self-repulsion and counter formation of modern science. But it must be stated more accurately that, at the decisive points, it is simply a form of Pseudoaristotelianism on the part of Scholasticism which forms the reference point of opposition.

The axiom of accompanying causality, which was borrowed from Aristotle's physics, first made a systematically indispensable element out of his theological extravagance, signs of which can be seen already in the Patristic authors.<sup>32</sup> In Augustine's allegory of the story of creation the thought of the constant need of nature for God was a moment of pious excess. When he comes to God's day of rest after six days of work, he interprets this only as meaning that no new species of creatures were created, and not at all that the *administratio* of those already created would be negated by the expression 'rest.'<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *In octo Libros de Physico Auditu sive Physicorum Aristotelis Commentaria* VII and VIII: 8. ed. P. Fr. Angeli and M. Pirota, O. P. (Naples: M. D'Auria Pontificius (Ed.), 1953), 383-425, 467 or St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, trans. Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spath, and W. Edmund Thirlkel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 421-26, 512.

<sup>31</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae (De Potentia)*, q. 3, a. 7. ed. P. Bazzi, et al. (Turin: Marietti, 1949), p. 57, or St. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. The English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952), p. 130. "God causes all the actions of nature by giving all natural things the forces whereby they are able to act..."

<sup>32</sup> Regarding the distinction between 'accompanying causality' and 'transposed causality,' see my *Die Genesis der kopernikanischen Welt* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 162ff.<sup>li</sup>



His words about the governance of created things, without which everything would immediately disintegrate, are concerned with the continued existence of a formed and ordered world and not with the reversibility of the creation from nothing. In this regard the term *conservatio*, which is not used here, is incomparably more radical due to its tendency toward continual creation. Basically, Augustine only warded off the analogy of the demiurge. The builder can withdraw from his completed work without endangering its continued existence. He can do it all the more, the better he has worked as a builder. This analogy, so blandly employed in modern times for the cosmic clock maker, has no connection with God's day of rest. The continuation of work, it is true, is conceived as a consequence of the will to create, but not, however, as a constant repetition of the act of creation, even if it is said here of the *omnipotens atque omnitenens virtus*<sup>xli</sup> that it is the cause of the continued existence of every creature (*causa subsistendi est omni creaturae*).<sup>xlii</sup> The form and species of things (*species, natura*) would fall to ruin if God withdrew from them his administrative and governing power. The consequence, however, would not be the nought but the chaos of a blind nature left to itself. The result, which is not yet equivalent to the thought of 'continual creation,' is to be understood in this sense: "The world could actually stand thus if God withdrew His governance." Only the paradoxical formulation of the 'unmoved motion,' as which the continuity bestowed upon things is to be understood, affords an intimation of the later connection of this thought with Aristotle's physics and its concept of motion.<sup>34</sup> God could certainly cease to create, but He cannot for one moment cease to operate. This was exactly the distinction which was done away with by the doctrine of continual creation. At the same time, however, the elimination of this distinction requires a new exposition of the Biblical passage on the rest of God following creation, or, at least, it can no longer be covered by Augustine's exegesis. The fascinating metaphor of the world clockwork already lay at the disposal of the fourteenth century when there was occasion to return to God's day of rest in connection with the upcoming doctrine of transferred causality (*impetus*). The perspective of the mechanical clock not only made plausible the possibility of an immanent impulse which nevertheless remained dependent upon raising the weights or winding the spring, but above all the possible regularity of the product when left to itself.

<sup>33</sup> St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram* IV. 22f, in: *Oeuvres*, 48, ed. and trans by (Latin and French) P. Agaesse and Solignac (Desclée de Brouwer, 1972), pp. 308-11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 23. 308-11: 'It is sufficiently clear to those who consider the matter properly that His incomparable, ineffable and – if such a thing can be understood – stable motion graciously imparts it (sc. wisdom) to the things being ordered, and that if it is once removed, if it once ceases from producing this effect, these will perish instantly.'

This seemed to guarantee the unalterability of the heavenly motions required for the constitution (and not only the measurement) of time, even apart from the assumption of moving intelligences, through an analogy. The cosmic foundation of the absolute homogeneity of time was the decisive argument for passing beyond the sphere of moving intelligences to the unmoved mover in the twelfth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In his commentary on precisely this passage in Aristotle John Buridan abrogates the indispensibility of continuous divine motion: "... He himself has ceased to move, and these motions will last forever afterward as a result of the impetus impressed upon these spheres."

There is another connection between creation and preservation for Scholasticism, which arises from the divine attribute of omnipresence. Thomas Aquinas clearly uses this argumentation out of dissatisfaction with the traditional political metaphors of administration, guidance, and governance. Thomas characteristically turns metaphorically to the highest simile of philosophical tradition. He compares the preservation of things in their existence to the illumination of the air by the sun, which is the image of the contemporaneity of mover and moved required by Aristotle:

And God is causing this effect in things not just when they begin to exist, but all the time they are maintained in existence, just as the sun is lighting up the atmosphere all the time the atmosphere remains lit. During the whole period of a thing's existence, therefore, God must be present to it, and present in a way in keeping with the way in which the thing possesses its existence.<sup>35</sup>

The image of the atmosphere illuminated by the sun's rays emphasizes the moment of presentiality, of a naturality and reliability intimating a lawfulness in the manner of the rising and setting of the sun. In this way the voluntarism associated with the concept of creation can recede into the background. Despite Aquinas' generally noticeable aversion to the metaphor of light, he can hardly avoid the simile of the sun here. Even Ockham will take it up, although with the specific intention of demonstrating a discontinuity between God and the world. With him, it is directed against the all too massive conclusions from the principle that, "Mover and moved must exist simultaneously," namely the conclusion, "Therefore, He is in all things," which presses conservation toward Spinozistic identity. For Ockham, the comparison with the sun stands precisely for the consideration that mover and moved must not touch each other: "The sun immediately causes light in some body here below and nevertheless is not present in this body."<sup>36</sup> It is important for a voluntaristic

<sup>35</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I q. 8 a. 1. II. 112-13.

metaphysics not to bring the divine will to conservation, as a function of omnipresence, into proximity with naturality or to construe conservation as presence.

The suitable image for willfully and arbitrarily created light is not the sun's rays, but lightning. It was to play a significant role in the metaphors of the Enlightenment as an expression of a danger overcome. Leibniz, who expressly takes up the doctrine of preservation as a continued creation in the appendix to the *Theodicy* and thereby makes reference to the simile of the sun,<sup>37</sup> uses the image of lightning for the dependence of the monads (they are born of continual fulgerations of the divinity). Abraham Gotthilf Kaestner in his treatise *Über die Lehre von der Schöpfung aus Nichts and derselben praktische Wirklichkeit* of 1770<sup>38</sup> reminds us of this use of metaphor:

If one were to imagine that God, in alternating moments, willed that a creature should exist and then willed that it should not, it would come to be one moment and pass away the next. And if one were to use the comparison (which has only been sketched) within the indicated limits, the image of these alternations would be a light, which glowed in the atmosphere one instant and disappeared the next. Such an appearance would be called lightning.

The problem which surfaces in this metaphoric turn lies in the impossibility of conceiving the voluntaristic concept of preservation in any fashion other than, as it were, atomistically, in a way which is realized in particles of time. It is precisely the moment of continuity which the radical interpretation of continual creation annuls. Even if an extremely compressed sequence of individual acts replaces this moment, these will only give the appearance of substantial solidity, just as running film hides the discontinuity of the individual frames.

Kaestner observed in a methodically brilliant way that metaphors

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<sup>36</sup> William of Ockham, *Quaestiones et decisiones in IV Libros Sententiarum* I, dist. 37, q. 1B (Lyon: Johann Trechsel, 9, 10 November, 1495), Microfilm 1960 of original in Vatican.

<sup>37</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. by C. J. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), VI. 440 (*Causa Dei Asserta per Justitiam ejus*, §9); or G. W. Leibniz, *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays*, trans. Paul and Anne Martin Schrecker (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1965), p. 115. "Actual beings depend on God for their existence as well as for their actions and depend not only upon his intellect, but also upon his will. Their existence depends on God . . . and they are maintained in existence by Him. There is a sound doctrine which has it that this divine preservation in existence is a continued creation — comparable to the rays continually emitted by the sun — although the creatures do not emanate from the divine essence nor emanate necessarily." This final qualification eliminates the danger contained in the naturalizing connotations of the simile of the sun, without indeed doing anything comparable for the lightning metaphor.

<sup>38</sup> Abraham Gotthilf Kaestner, *Vermischte Schriften*, Third Edition (Altenburg: Richterische Buchhandlung, 1783), p. 296. Kaestner explains Leibniz's use of the simile of the sun as follows (p. 295): "Leibniz, as is well known, read the Scholastics, as had Vergil Ennius." Kaestner pays no further heed to the metaphysical indecision which Leibniz betrays with regard to the metaphors of radiation and lightning.



are not merely rhetorical ornaments here. This became apparent to him from the way in which the metaphor of lightning was recounted in the article "Leibniz" in the ninth volume of the French *Encyclopédie* of 1765. God as unity or simple substance appears as the origin of all created monads, which, so to speak, emanate (*qui en sont émanées*) from Him through continual flashes of lightning (*par des fulgurations continuelles*). Kaestner justly urges that the author could not have understood Leibniz in view of this inference from his metaphors.<sup>39</sup> Neoplatonic emanation is not consistent with voluntaristic lightning, and the present tense form of *continual* creation is not to be rendered through the past tense form of *coming to be*.

Once this insight is lost, the misunderstanding becomes hypertrophied. When Bailly referred to the *Encyclopédie* article in his *Preisschrift* of 1769 in memory of Leibniz, which was accorded special distinction by the Berlin Academy, he developed the idea a little further with knowledge Leibniz surely could not have had. He speaks namely of the 'electric matter' of lightning, and has the monads burst forth from the womb of God like flashes of lightning burst forth from a cloud.<sup>40</sup> Kaestner makes fun of the culmination of this metaphorical inference which autonomously unravels itself. The commemorative speaker makes, "the creator into a thunder cloud, and exposes us all to the danger of being struck by his lightning, which penetrates all bodies." When one considers that, in this history of the metaphor, the topic was originally the problem of preservation, this paradoxical ridicule is at the same time an indication that the problem of *conservatio* has been solved, just as the threat of a thunderstorm had then been rendered harmless by [the invention of] the lightning rod.

#### IV

Not only does that Aristotelianism which is stamped by, and subservient to, theology go beyond Aristotle in the debate on the problem of conservation; also the orthodox Aristotelianism of the Faculty of the Arts, as well as that of an Averroistic bent, cites Aristotle only with the comparatively modest result of *Physics* II. 3 (195b 16–25). But there he only speaks of accompanying causality, and thus of the

<sup>39</sup> In the passage of his article referred to (IX. 375 B), the encyclopedist explicitly justifies his use of the term "fulguration" on the basis of the genuinely Platonic provenience of Leibniz's thought. Compare "Leibniz," *Encyclopédie* IX (Paris: Livourne, 1773).340: "We use this word 'fulguration' because we know of no other which fits. Besides, this idea of Leibniz is wholly Platonic in terms of its subtlety and sublimity."

<sup>40</sup> Jean Sylvain Bailly, *Éloge de Leibniz* (Unpublished manuscript written in Berlin, 1768, Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris), p. 24:

"God, principle of all the monads, which have emanated from His bosom by means of a sort of fulguration, like lightning, which escapes from a half opened cloud, sprinkling electric particles upon the earth and penetrating all bodies."

strict simultaneity of the efficient and concrete causes with the processes they affect for the duration of these processes. An example is the physician. He is only a physician in the strict sense of the actualization of his capabilities as long as he executes a specific treatment of a specific patient. The physician and the master builder are conceived as relational concepts the content of which can only be fulfilled in the actualized relation to the object of their skills. When the master builder ceases to erect buildings, he reverts to his mere potentiality. The question of the continued existence of the building, which definitely interested the Middle Ages in regard to the world, plays absolutely no role in this discussion of causal theory.

Question II, Article 13 of a commentary on the *Physics*, which was long attributed to Siger of Brabant, is relevant to this text. The specific authorship is of little importance for our interest in view of the dignity of the text.<sup>41</sup> Here it is not asked whether, by analogy with the Aristotelian text, the first cause could remain a 'cause' as pure actuality if that which it had at one point caused could continue to exist without its further influence. The problem is viewed entirely from the perspective of the indigence of the effect in regard to its own continued existence. The author does not shy away from inverting the Aristotelian justification for the postulate of the simultaneity of accompanying causality: "There is no effect in act without a cause in act." The master builder, when he realizes the relation to his object, is a cause in act. When he has nothing to do, he is a cause in potency. On the other hand, the continued existence of an effected object does not require the persistent efficacy of all of its causes, but only of the first and sufficient. The 'argumentative joke' lies in the assertion of symmetry, which flows smoothly into the text with an "... *et e converso*."<sup>xliii</sup> This is, indeed, not without verbal magic: our commentator speaks of a relation between *domifactor* and *domificatio*.<sup>xliv</sup> For this the problem indeed hardly exists. Aristotle spoke of the master builder and his finished work. The Scholastic spoke of the master builder and the process of construction, and certainly the one could not be conceived apart from the other prior to mechanization, "because they exist and do not exist simultaneously." This argument does not support the conclusion of the analogy: "On this account, it will be similar for efficiently giving being, which conserves itself."

The objection of the commentator that an enduring efficacy of the first cause toward that which it has effected must constantly add new moments of actuality to the latter, so that it is enlarged into infinity, is interesting in regard to the disputations of the nominalistic

<sup>41</sup> Siger de Brabant, *Questions sur la Physique d'Aristote*, ed. Phillipe Delhaye (Louvain: Editions de l'Institut supérieure de philosophie, 1941), pp. 101-03: "Whether what is caused by the first being has need of it in order to conserve its own being."

physics of the fourteenth century. It would be absurd for an Aristotelian. The background — here also organic-metaphoric — about which the problem of preservation is oriented, reveals itself over against this objection. Everything which is is corruptible, withers, decays, suffers: everything which moves manifests its frailty and indigence by continually transforming possibility into actuality. If this basic conception is correct, the efficacy of the first cause toward the world it has wrought and that which is contained within it is not a constant augmentation, but the continual restitution of a loss. Even the world of the stars, whose motion the Aristotelian had to assume to be eternal, is not exempt from this. The regularity of the motions of the spheres is notoriously retraced to the fact that the first cause always adds exactly as much as has been lost.<sup>42</sup> Even that which is so defined that it cannot not be can nevertheless have a pure actuality determinable in this manner from another agent. This is quite obvious when said in regard to the heavenly spheres and the relation to the unmoved first mover. Here once again, there is an astonishing and almost magical conceptual realism at work. Everything which is not first is already by force of this definition incapable of determining itself to be what it is, namely of being lower in rank in an ordered series. What does not have its actuality in itself bears a relation of indifference toward this actuality, which relation constantly, as it were, reveals itself in a detachability from this actuality: "Indeed, all things other than the First necessarily require something else by means of which they are conserved in being, for they are in potency toward their own being."

How is the unpleasant objection to this position, that in the organic process of generation the son can, in the long run, exist even without the constant efficacy of the father, to be answered? Does not this example, which broaches the organic orientation from another side, suffice to prove that at least some efficient causes are capable of bestowing existence and the preservation thereof when absent? This inference is bluntly rejected as untrue. If an actual object is capable of enduring even in the absence of its cause, then this cause was only presumably sufficient for the generation of the object. The possibility of separation, of the nonsimultaneity of existence proves that a higher and more sufficient cause must be sought. For the example of the relation between father and son, this means that the former is the author of the latter only accidentally: "The father is, by himself, the cause of his generation, but not, however, of his substance." The artifice in the argumentation is once again clear: wher-

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 103: "Something is added to those things which are conserved in being by means of motion, because they are conserved by innovation. But because no such thing is eternal, everything subject to motion being corruptible, the addition does not go on to infinity."



ever a cause turns out to be inessential for the preservation of that which it has wrought, wherever accompanying causality cannot be demonstrated phenomenally, then the sufficiency of the causality is questioned. In this way, the thesis which is to be inferred as a conclusion of the argument enters already into the premises. If a master builder can let his product stand for itself, he himself is indeed from this moment on no longer a builder in the full relevant sense. But he demonstrates above and beyond this that he never was the sufficient cause of his work. There is no trace of the sort of esteem for the clock maker of later years. The clock maker distinguishes himself precisely by the fact that his product can endure without him or his intervention. But the premise here is exactly the opposite: "If something be an agent without which the effect can continue to exist after it has been made, it is not the sufficient agent of this effect." Since, however, in the final analysis the first cause must compensate for the possible insufficiency of all the other causes, it must at least fulfill the conditions of a sufficient cause, namely, that, apart from it, none of its effects can endure.

This text may not be very original in a Scholastic context. It is, however, just as informative in regard to an exposure of the weaknesses of its modes of argumentation and background as it is in respect to the presumably orthodox use of the focal Aristotelian text of the *Physics*.

The Scholastic dilemma in relation to the conceptual history of *conservatio* may be characterized as a divergence of systematic interests in the *proof* of God's existence on the one hand, and in the *concept* of God on the other. A concept of God which is satisfactory for Christian theology cannot treat the attribute of the creator as a limiting value of the quality of the unmoved mover. The proof of God's existence, which must meet increasingly rational standards, only functions in Aristotle's model when a second act need, as it were, only be added to the first act of the world, and hence when motion, as the deciding category of all physical actuality, already presupposes the temporally unlimited existence of the world.

In the argumentation of the twelfth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Thomas Aquinas made a very decisive omission, namely the conclusion of the pure actuality of the unmoved movers drawn from the absolute homogeneity of time. This shortcut is taken at the price of that which is to be demonstrated, namely the concept of God. Thomas has made clear in his central philosophical work that also for him the Aristotelian proof of the unmoved mover rests upon the presupposition of the eternity of the world, and this means upon the exclusion of the thought of creation. This critical passage in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* I. 13 has since then embarrassed not only commentators, but also editors. Thus even the Leonine edition of

1888, which is based on the autograph, changes "*ex suppositione aeternitatis*" into "*ex suppositione novitatis*."<sup>43</sup> The proof from the idea of accompanying causality succeeds only when it implicitly refrains from declaring what it has proven to be the creator. On close observation, conservation thereby becomes an absolutely essential and only function of a God proven in this manner. At the same time, its radicality is lessened in that a 'reminder' of physical substance is not touched at all by it. Thomas indeed makes known the insight that the *via efficacissima*<sup>xlv</sup> of the proof of God's existence will fail insofar as it is necessary to posit a beginning of the world. In fact, however, the proof exacts this price only at a relative first causality the absolute rank of which remains unattainable. This direction of interest of the proof is also the reason why the concept of conservation could not attain its radical form of continual creation until the Scholastic proof of God's existence suffered a crisis favoring the intensification of the concept of God at the hands of Duns Scotus' critique. The immediate dependency of the world upon God cannot be demonstrated as long as reason exacts of itself, and trusts itself with, the proof of God's existence.

This excursion should make intelligible why William of Ockham, in his altercation with Duns Scotus' critique of the proofs of God's existence, finally espouses openly the position that the proof cannot apply at all to the production of the world, since this would not exclude a regression to infinity. It must rather be grounded on the conservation of the world as it presents itself for man, which, however, because of its indifference to its own existence,<sup>44</sup> is contingent. This conservation is no longer derivable from the axiom of accompanying causality, for Ockham has already broken with the Aristotelian theory of motion to such an extent that he believes in the possibility of the motion of a body which cannot be retraced to the simultan-

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly enough the original manuscript of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* I: 13 (Compare Latin, I. 20; or English, I. 94) has a lacuna of which P. Engelhardt advised me in connection with my article "H. Dolch, Kausalität im Verständnis des Theologen und der Begründer neuzeitlicher Metaphysik," *Philosophische Rundschau* 3 (1955), 206, where I dealt more extensively with the text. The change in the Leonine Edition of 1888 corresponds to the *Editio Piana* and to those thus designated as *codices correcti* by Sylvester Ferrariensis. That the change cannot be traced in the older tradition and therewith is of an interpretative tendency (which means either that the original version did not meet approval or that it was not understood) is clear from the conscientious note of the Leonine Edition of 1918: "We have not discovered what they intend." Compare also the subjectivizing interpretation of the Vivès Edition (Paris: 1874), where the effectiveness of the proof is geared to the level of its addressees:

"If, therefore, you assume the temporality of the world in order to demonstrate the existence of God, you will not reach those who deny that temporality. Hence the most effective way of proving His existence is from the supposition of the eternity of the world. Indeed by means of this argument you will be able to convince everyone."

<sup>44</sup> Philotheus Boehner, "Zu Ockhams Beweis der Existenz Gottes," *Franziskanische Studien* 32 (1950), 40ff.

eous causality of another body or a medium.<sup>45</sup> This reinforcement of the proof by means of conservation is made theologically respectable by abandoning the distinction between conservation and creation in a conceptually critical manner. This could only be meaningful on the basis of the removal of the *conservatio* from Aristotle's physics.

The two concepts differ only in their negative connotations. Creation implies the negation of the existence of the world immediately before the act of creation, while preservation implies that it is interrupted in its existence.<sup>46</sup> The identity of the concept has, so it appears, its real foundation in the consistency of God's thought, and not in the unannihilability of the creature.<sup>47</sup> "To produce or to create does not differ from conservation in respect to God, for nothing can be produced by him apart from being conserved by him."

In addition to the parsimony which prevents Ockham from admitting a difference between creation and preservation, the symmetry between creation and annihilation plays an even greater role in the voluntaristic conception of God. The reduction to a pure nothing which is reserved for the divine will and power implies an express act. It is thus not the mere absence of conservation. It is rather the deliberate contradiction to creation, which no creature can ever attain through a destructive will. For in every action which pertains to creatures, the existence of matter (to which it relates) is necessarily presupposed.<sup>48</sup> The contingency of creation, above and beyond its requirement for preservation, is sharpened into the possibility of annihilation, as long as God does not limit his omnipotence by practicing it. This holds in the extreme case of the considerations which here become viable, of the type of free variation, and even for the immortality of the human soul.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the expression *conservare* is used in an explicit meaning in a theological connection which has been cut off from the concept of creation. Such is the case in regard to the question of whether God can detach an accident from the substance which bears it and preserve each by itself, a question which is important for Christology and the doctrine of the sacraments. This runs strictly contrary to the original logic of the formation of both concepts. The High Scho-

<sup>45</sup> E. A. Moody, "Galileo and Avempace," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12 (1951), 399.

<sup>46</sup> William of Ockham, *Quaestiones et decisiones in IV Libros Sententiarum* II, q. 3-5X: "If you should say that to conserve and to create are different, I would reply that, in so far as the terms are used in a positive sense they do not differ. But they do in reference to the negative connoted, for creation connotes a negative immediately preceding being, while conservation connotes a negative which is the interruption of being."

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, II. q. 10H.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, II. q. 7J.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, I. dist. 17. q. 1L: "... that soul He created contingently; therefore he can annihilate it."



lastic manner of regarding the world had, so to speak, its normality in contingency as the lack of the creature of the right to its existence, which the preserving God respected once it had been posited. Instead of this thematization of normality, the pursuit of marginal questions comes steadily to the fore, for which precisely the consideration of annihilation is paradigmatic. One needs only to think of its significance with reference to the instability of any theory of knowledge. The more philosophical thought, in its serviceability to the exposition of pre-given Biblical and theological ideas, turns toward the topic of extraordinary acts and the intervention of God in the course of the world in order to harmonize them with the catalogue of the metaphysical attributes of the absolute, the clearer the inner systematic need becomes to characterize normality as that which can be broken through. In other words, although it bears itself and is no longer borne, it is an actuality totally lacking in necessity. It is necessary to view this process of the systematic polarization of normality and exceptionality, of *potentia ordinata* and *potentia absoluta*<sup>xlii</sup> as the forerunner of the outbreak of rationality from the late Medieval system. This is the outbreak into autonomy and self-preservation which Dilthey wished to put down as part of a Renaissance of antiquity.

The Medieval sharpening of the concept of contingency, according to which the actuality of the world does not suffice to make it dependable or enduring for mankind, also laid down the canon for its own demise. If it lay in the modality of the being of the world not to be able to endure without divine preservation or not to be able to act lawfully apart from the express divine will, there was only one alternative for escaping this instability. The world itself had to become the necessary being. The transition to pantheism is bound up with the beginnings of a philosophy of nature which has started to view self-preservation as the meaning of the world organism. It provides nature with its sublime necessity by elevating it to the equivalent of a creative power, negating the thesis that God could create anything, except a God. While Ockham had asserted that omnipotence cannot accomplish everything which involves no contradiction simply because it cannot bring forth a God,<sup>50</sup> the Platonic word of

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., I. dist. 17. q. 8G: "...one who is omnipotent cannot effect everything which does not imply a contradiction, for he cannot make a god." That problem arose in the fourteenth century as a limiting question in the theology of grace: Whether the increase of love (*augmentatio caritatis*) can lead to infinite love (*caritas infinita*), as in the case of Christ. A divine person originates (*procedit*) through generation, not through creation. In this manner it is possible to salvage the traditional dictum by changing it to "He who is omnipotent can make everything *creatable* that does not involve a contradiction..." Just as the voluntary character of the first cause is presupposed by the contingency of the world (even Ockham no longer believes it possible to reason from the latter to the former, but only that the latter can be deduced, given the former as an article of faith), the naturalization of the cause is the condition for the elimination of the contingency. "If indeed He (that is, God) were a natural cause, since He would be infinite, He would bring forth His entire effect, and totality

the world as the visible God was taken seriously in a new respect in the sixteenth century by Vives, Telesio, and Giordano Bruno, namely as a rejection of contingency, as the assertion of the realized totality of the possible against selective voluntarism. This tendency culminates in the substantialistic monism of Spinoza.

## V

Here it is necessary to return to Descartes to characterize conclusively the position upon which Spinoza's negation of conservation rests. Descartes discovers the problem from the perspective of the atomic character of present moments in which the evidence of the *cogito ergo sum* presents itself, as distinct from the phenomenal permanence of physical objects and from that of consciousness as well. This means that continual creation is retained, but that the interest and conception of this idea does not proceed as a consequence of the conception of creation nor, finally, as the selfsame execution of which the late Middle Ages had represented conservation.

For Descartes, creation is the constitution of actuality at *every* moment and only accessorially the answer to the question of the *first* moment, of the beginning, the constitutive contingency of which differs in no way from the experience which consciousness has of the contingency of its presence in the *cogito*. The expression conservation is thus not identical with that of creation insofar as it represents the metaphysical explication of the latter, but rather in the way that the talk of creation is logically understandable only as the limiting case of the constantly experienceable atomistic contingency of time and its requirement of continual causation: "The present time has no causal dependence on the time immediately preceding it. Hence, in order to secure the continued existence of a thing, no less a cause is required than that needed to produce it at the first."<sup>51</sup> The inference from the cause, required for continual endurance in time, to the identity of the primary cause is not even conclusive, but in addition, has become incidental.<sup>52</sup> Preservation requires an inner force, and our

as well." (Compare *Ibid.*, II. q. 3-5 K.) But God also becomes a natural cause regressively when the world becomes an infinite being (*ens infinitum*). This is when it allows no room for questioning its totality, which exhausts the ground of its creation. Perhaps the most essential contribution that the Platonic tradition makes to the formation of the early modern conception of the world is the return, by way of the lordship model of the unmoved and complacent mover-god, to the Demiurge of the *Timaeus*. The Demiurge expands in and on the world all the artifice and plenitude which, most fitting for him, is at all possible. The god of the new philosophy of nature expends himself entirely. The preliminary form of the kind of pantheism to which Spinoza would later give his stamp is on this account a world which maintains itself in the sum of its processes. The Stoic self-preservation enters into this cosmic exuberance by way of creationism. The complete reconciliation of all processes is assured from the beginning. The Heraclitean world is at the same time that of Parmenides. (Bruno refers expressly to Parmenides.)

<sup>51</sup> Descartes, *Secondae Responsiones*, Axioma II, in, *Oeuvres* VIII. 165; or *Works* II. 56.

mind does not in any way indicate that we possess it. The talk of a preservative force is puzzling at this point because it must at the same time be presupposed that the cause which preserves us and the world must itself preserve itself by means of a force. If the Cartesian proof of God's existence cannot set out from contingency as a determination of the world (for the proof must primarily provide the presuppositions for the transition of the certainty of knowledge to the physical world), then contingency becomes a formal determination of time as the mode of givenness of self-consciousness. This indeed gains absolute certainty for its present moment, but is exposed to the uncertainties of memories and imagination with respect to the past and the future. The controversial real distinction between the essence and being of physical bodies advanced by Scholasticism proves to be a descriptive report of the inner experience referring to the indifference of time particles toward one another. It is the certainty of the incapacity for self-preservation which is promoted by a consciousness of time. This argumentation over and over again turns out to be the basis of the Cartesian concept of God. If man had the power to preserve himself, he would all the more have to be able to give himself all the properities (*perfectiones*) which his consciousness indicates that he lacks. But this is just what he cannot do. The conclusion: "Therefore, I do not have the power of conserving myself."<sup>53</sup> From this is inferred again: "Consequently, it is another being which conserves my existence." This conclusion, however, only assists in the transition to the determination of the concept of God with the aid of those characteristics which man is not capable of giving himself, although he feels their absence as a defect: "Therefore the perception of the same perfection exists in Him by whom I am conserved." God possesses these characteristics which are missing for consciousness formally or eminently.

In an analogous manner Descartes had already in the *Discourse* attempted to derive from the idea of a perfect being found within the mind the incapability of the finite mind to form this idea by its own power. From this he had concluded that there must be an adequate causality for this idea. He posited thereby an analogous dependence on divine power of the physical world, the existence of which could at first only be hypothetically assumed. Thus, these objects could not exist for an instant without God.<sup>54</sup> Descartes also used the meta-

<sup>52</sup> Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae* I. 21, in, *Oeuvres* VIII. 13; or *Works* I. 227: "...and from the fact that we now are, it does not follow that we shall be a moment afterwards, if some cause — the same that produces us — does not continue to produce us; that is to say, conserve us." Note the change in the argument here from *Meditations* III. 31 (*Oeuvres* VIII. 49; or *Works* I. 168), where he states that reasoning from the past to the present moment is inadmissible.

<sup>53</sup> Descartes, *Secundae Responsiones*, Prop. III, in, *Oeuvres* VII. 168f; or *Works* II. 58.

<sup>54</sup> Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode* IV. 4, in, *Oeuvres* VI. 36; or *Works* I. 103.



phor of the sun in this connection.

He speaks of a stone preserved in Bologna which allegedly can store up sunlight. One may not conclude from this that anything can be preserved without the influence of God. The case is rather the opposite: "It is much more certain . . . , that no thing can exist without divine concurrence than that there can be no light of the sun without the sun."<sup>55</sup> Descartes distinguishes in this connection between a positive act of God, which can only be good and preservative, and the withdrawal of preservation as a mere suspension of assistance, which is not an 'action' in the strict sense, and thus is not subject to the criteria of justification: "I declare that it is not possible for God to destroy something except by ceasing in his concurrence. For otherwise it would fall into nonbeing by a positive action." The explication of the theorem of preservation is adduced once again in the *Discourse*, although it is not completely developed because it is based upon external experience, which is still of hypothetical validity, and does not rest upon an awareness of deficiency. He cites it in the form which he designates as universally recognized by theologians, namely, that the activity by which God presently preserves the world is completely like that with which He created it.<sup>56</sup> This thought is supposed to reinforce the cosmogonic outline at this point. It is, namely, supposed to offer the equivalent of the single occurrence of the creation of a world completed from the beginning, in the gradual and continuous development from an originally chaotic situation. Descartes intends to prove this as a consequence which is contained in the above stated principle of the theologians. Descartes' assertion, prompted out of caution, that it is far more probable that God made the world as it should be from the beginning is thereby at least counterbalanced, or invalidated, on purpose.

The internalization of continual creation is thus not yet apparent in the *Discourse*. It is, however, already clear at what systematic point this thought is required and whence it could be derived. A new concept of contingency and of continual creation arises by way of the internalization and association with discrete time as the dimension of inner experience. This then finds a formulation in the *Principia* which can be generalized with reference to the nature of the duration of things. Spinoza's cognizance of this in 1663 is just as well known to us as are Leibniz's *Animadversions* written before 1692.

Spinoza's achievements for this conceptual history lie above all in

<sup>55</sup> Descartes, *Correspondance*, August, 1641, in, *Oeuvres* III. 429. Here there is also conventional argumentation, that is, argumentation that does not take its point of departure in consciousness: "God would not show His power to be immense if He made things such that afterwards they could exist without Him. On the contrary, that power would be shown to be finite, if things, once created no longer depended on Him."

<sup>56</sup> Descartes, *Discours* V. 3, in, *Oeuvres* VI. 45; or *Works* I. 109.

the high degree of abstraction which he bestowed upon the principle of self-preservation beyond its organic metaphoric tradition and its ethical as well as political applicability. This abstract universal principle may be understood primarily as a proposition on the burden of proof. It provides the rule for when justification can be required. What requires inquiry is not persistence, but the alteration of any object or circumstance. Actuality does not need to be 'pure' in the sense of the Aristotelian-Scholastic pure act in order to have inalterability predicated of it. The traditional contradictories of rest and motion certainly come together in this concept of the unaltered circumstance. Hobbes had paved the way in this respect. The opposite of motion is not rest but contrary motion.<sup>57</sup> Motion is no longer conceived as an extension which is directed toward a state of rest at a natural place and which is finite, that is, self-exhausting: "Rest cannot be the cause of anything."<sup>58</sup> For Spinoza, the continued existence of a given circumstance, its perseverance, is simply pre-given. The action of new factors is required to change it. The principle of self-preservation in its abstract generalization retains nothing of a form of behavior, or organic drive, or a psychic striving. It has lost all teleological implications even if the inferences concerning ethics and politics which are presumably derivable from this premise subsequently confer a teleological air upon it.

Spinoza's proposal that the striving (*conatus*) of a thing to maintain itself in existence (*in suo Esse perseverare*) is nothing other than the essence of the thing itself, its *actualis essentia*<sup>59</sup> (the same proposition that Dilthey believed that Spinoza had taken over from the Stoic tradition<sup>60</sup>) is nonetheless, despite the term *conatus*,<sup>xlvii</sup> the denial of a specific impulse in the form of an inclination. For he maintains that it is nothing other than the thing left unto itself which presents itself as a state of perseverance or in the perseverance of a state. It is true that the position of this discussion in the rigidly segmented structure of Spinoza's *Ethics*, namely in the third part, which treats of the origin and nature of the affects, suggests the Stoic tradition. This traditional localization is, however, misleading.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* IX. 7, in *Opera Latina* ed. William Molesworth (1839: rpt.; Aalen, Germany: Scientia Verlag, 1966), I. 111; or *The Metaphysical System of Thomas Hobbes*, trans. and ed. by Mary Whiton Calkins (Chicago: Open Court, 1913), 74: "The same reason may serve to prove that whatsoever is moved will always be moved on in the same way and with the same velocity..."

<sup>58</sup> Hobbes, *De Corpore* IX. 9, in *Opera Latina* I. 112; or *Metaphysical System*, 75: "...nor can any action proceed from it; seeing neither motion nor mutation can be caused by it."

<sup>59</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *Opera Quotquot Reperta Sunt*, ed. by J. van Vloten and J. P. N. Land (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914), I. 127; or Spinoza, *Selections*, ed. by John Wild (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), 215. (*Ethics* III, prop. 7.)

<sup>60</sup> W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* II. 286.

In order to perceive this, it is necessary to see that the principle of self-preservation, as the primary actuality of things in Spinoza, is derived from earlier propositions, above all from Proposition 4: "A thing cannot be destroyed except by an external cause." There is no longer the inner factor of decay, analogous to aging or exhaustion, which is the immanent fatality of things by which the Stoics were moved when they allowed their *pyr technikon* to decline into the *pyr atechnon*.<sup>xliii</sup> Voltaire exemplified this conception with reference to Montesquieu's investigation of the decline of Rome as an exotic counterexample to modern thinking in his Brahman Anecdote. He has the Indian sage make fun of the *belles dissertations*<sup>xlix</sup> on the decline and fall of states which had become stylish: "You're wasting your time . . . that empire fell because it existed. All must fall."<sup>61</sup> This constitutes an exact inversion of the burden of proof as maintained by Spinoza. The susceptibility for nothingness is the extremely special case of the narrow kingdom of organic beings whose powers exhaust themselves and to whom a specific length of life appears to have been allotted. Man must accept this special case as the universal orientation. According to Spinoza, the physical state of the world has no relation to time: "The effort, by means of which each thing exists, does not involve a definite time."<sup>62</sup> It is evident that 'persevere' has become the materially more adequate term. On the other hand, the formula of conserving one's being in its transitive form is required simply in order to descend once again, as it were, from this universal world principle to actions in connection with an ethic, and in order to be able to define happiness and virtue by means of it.<sup>63</sup>

The expression is also intended critically. It is the formula which confronts the tradition of conservation, takes up its problems, and brings it to an end. For, entirely apart from whether the Stoic tradition can explain to some extent what has been rationally accomplished, or that which has been brought to rationality, there unmistakably remains at the core an historically well-based and precise distancing which rejects the thought that conservation is the necessary external cause of every being. The entire Stoic genealogy suggested by Dilthey brings forth nothing unless one sees what it has already made topical and plausible in the beginnings of the reception of Telesio through Campanella, namely, the replacement of the transitive

<sup>61</sup> François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, "Etats," in, *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, in, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Crapalet, 1818), XXIV. 627; or Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Peter Gay (New York: Basic Books, 1962), I. 258.

<sup>62</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics* III. prof. 8, in, *Opera* I. 128; or *Selections*, p. 216. This translation has been edited.

<sup>63</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics* IV. prop. 18, scholium, in, *Opera* I. 196; or *Selections*, 302.



form of the thought of preservation with the reflexive and intransitive. This connection remains obscure in Dilthey. This connection alone, however, renders it intelligible that the renewal of the world organism can only be a preliminary makeshift solution, the rationality of which did not suffice for the new function of confronting continual creation, offered in over-sharp outlines by Descartes, and the principle of contingency which is put into effect in it.

Spinoza's rationality at this point avoids the exorbitant demand of Leibniz's question of sufficient reason, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" The metaphysical analogy of *conservatio sui* to *causa sui* nonetheless remains unmistakable. Spinoza, however, does not demand that a sufficient reason be sought for there being something rather than nothing, but only for when that which is ceases to be what it is. Self-preservation now entails such a principle of exclusion of questions regarding the sufficient reason and a corresponding admission of questions relating to the alteration of circumstances. Herein lies the connection with what Newton's principle of inertia was supposed to accomplish: Limited to mechanics, it serves only to give meaning to certain questions, namely such as those about the magnitude of forces. Although Newton's first law is only definable through the preceding corollary on absolute space and time, nonetheless, taken by itself, it has no physical content. It receives this first through the second law about alterations of motions and the forces corresponding to them.

I would like to present two illustrative examples of the connection between Newton's law of inertia and the abstract metaphysical principle of preservation as the antithesis of continual creation. There is a peculiar, perhaps ununderstood intermingling of tradition and new ideas in the *Physics* of 1710 of Johannes Clericus (Jean Leclerc). At first, the concept of motion as the most simple modification of a body<sup>64</sup> is subordinated to a general notion of circumstance. This is asserted to be constant under the condition that other causes are excluded.<sup>65</sup> In this connection, an elaboration of the positivity of motion which maintains the contradictory opposition of rest and motion, and which raises the question of whether rest is something positive or only the privation of motion, will not at all fit.<sup>66</sup> An entirely

<sup>64</sup> Jean LeClerc, *Physica* V. 5n. 1, in, *Opera Philosophica* (Leipzig: T. Georgi, 1710), IV. 198.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., V. 5n. 13, in, *Opera* IV. 202: "Any undivided body always remains in the state in which it is unless an external cause imparts some change to it." On this basis he disputes the view that circular motion is natural: "Each body is inclined to motion of its own accord such that it proceeds to be moved according to a straight line, but certainly not according to a curved line." (Compare *ibid.*, prop. 2.) The magnitude of the difficulty of doing justice to the rational economy of the matter at hand is betrayed in the words, "... is inclined to motion of its own nature (*es seipso tendit*)."

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., V. 5n. 14, in, *Opera* IV. 204-07: "It is a question whether rest, the opposite of motion, is something positive or indeed nothing more than the privation of motion..."

scholastic thought experiment in which it is imagined that God wishes to impart motion to a ball is still evident here. In order to bring a moved body to rest, God need only to cease to wish to move it, "apart from any positive volition." On the other hand, in order to set into motion a body that is at rest, it is not enough for God to cease to will that it rest. He must rather will the motion of this body and this to a certain degree. Rest is thus the mere suspension of the divine act. Motion, however, presupposes a positive determination thereof. The inference runs: "Rest, therefore, is nothing, but motion is truly something." And from this it again follows that the smallest moved body is capable of setting into motion the largest body that is at rest. It is decisive that Clericus does not apply his thought experiment to acceleration but to motion so that he can dispense with the basic idea of the transitive form of conservation only for the body at rest.

The *Fundamental Principles of the Doctrine of Nature* by Johann Christian Erxleben still manifests the perennial (for the entire century) linguistic difficulties of liberating the formulation of the principle of inertia from the language of inner impulses, forces, and inclinations. This is of great value for us because Lichtenberg enriched the work of his predecessor at Göttingen, first with a preface in the third edition (1784), and then his own sections with the addition of the sixth edition (1794), which was, by the way, in any case one of the most important textbooks of the eighteenth century. It is clear above all that the Göttingen professor of philosophy (since 1771) was striving to establish a connection with the principle of sufficient reason of Leibniz. The constant struggle to eliminate the term 'force' from physics,<sup>67</sup> which lasted over two hundred years, is expressed by Erxleben in a sort of circumspect formality which in no way wishes to speak, with Newton, of a force of inertia: "... it thus appears as though there is something in a body which constantly strives to maintain it in its present state, as though the body by virtue of this something resisted rest when it is in motion and motion when it is at rest."<sup>68</sup> This may in no way be called a force. For a thing would need no special force, "... in order to remain what it is." Furthermore: "Can one really imagine a force which never acts of

<sup>67</sup> Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, *Essai de Cosmologie* II, in, *Oeuvres* (1879: rpt.; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1974), I. 28-29: "(force) a word which does nothing but hide our ignorance."

<sup>68</sup> Johann Christian Erxleben, *Anfangsgründe der Naturlehre*, Sixth edition (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1794), 55f (pp. 49f). Kant's "Neuer Lehrbegriff der Bewegung und Ruhe" of 1758 should also be mentioned here with its observation that, "... this force of inertia has been concocted without necessity." It can be represented by means of the equality of action and reaction "... without having to conjure up a special kind of a force of nature ...," although "... this assumed force is of uncommonly serviceable ..." use for the deduction of laws of motion.<sup>13</sup>

itself, but only resists? which possesses no magnitude for itself, but is only small or large as a result of that which it resists?" From here, the relation to the principle of sufficient reason is conceivable for Erxleben. 'Inertia' is nothing more than a specific aspect thereof: "Inertia is thus in fact nothing more than the principle of sufficient reason applied to changes in the states of bodies. If bodies are to be capable of rest and motion, they must be inert."

In light of this passage, in which the effects of Newton and Leibniz seem unexpectedly to converge, it is once again necessary to turn to Leibniz and his lightning metaphor for continual creation in the *Theodicy* mentioned above. It becomes clear how problematic the metaphor of fulgurations appears in the context of the philosophy of Leibniz when we look back at the radicality of his earlier critique of the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Descartes' *Principles* and see how much more consistently Leibniz constructs his counter position than did Poiret, who was promoted to the chief witness of this critique in the *Encyclopaedia*. Leibniz gives the exact inverse of the argument developed in the Cartesian text in his running notes thereon. An additional condition which Descartes introduces regarding formal causality must be taken into consideration. It is not sufficient for proving the existence of God from the essence of the duration of things that the individual moments of this duration do not stand in any relation of conditionality to each other, so that the future existence of the same object cannot be inferred from the present except by means of another cause. This preserving cause is subject to the further condition that it must be identical with the original producing cause according to its essential form, so that every act of conservation becomes formally analogous to one of reproduction. Self-preservation is excluded for just this reason, since it in principle requires the same formal causality as the original creation. But no being is capable of this which — thus the train of thought must be brought to its logical conclusion — is not already the cause of itself. The Cartesian argument of the *Principia* already contains this intimation of Spinoza's solution. Self-preservation is thus for Descartes a theological attribute, a characteristic of the divine relation to being. Self-preservation can accordingly only mean that one is God.

If Leibniz demands that there be a reason for change rather than a reason for duration, one must not simply ascribe this to his entirely different principle of time which underlies the principle of continuity. Leibniz is a master in the art of a critical argumentation which largely rests upon the assumptions of the one subject to criticism. He regards the duration of an object as a succession of circumstances in which each constitutes the condition of formal causality for its successor, thus as exactly that which is disputed by Descartes in respect to the problem of a beginning. Leibniz deduces his energetic princip-



le of constancy according to the following principle, which can be formulated in an entirely scholastic manner: "The entire effect is equivalent to the full cause."<sup>69</sup> If one regards an object as a closed system upon which there are no influences of force, then every circumstance of this object represents the effect of the one preceding. An additional, external cause is required to effect a change, and it is only for this extrinsic relation that causality in the strict sense is applicable. Every finite thing as well thus subsists of itself regardless of the fact that it is not of itself the foundation of this existence. It is characteristic of Leibniz's exact incision into Descartes' argumentation that he likewise returns to human self-consciousness for this form of existence of self-preservation, which here, as with Descartes, is representative of everything actual: "From our existence at the present moment, it follows that we will also exist later, if no reason for change intervenes."<sup>70</sup>

## VI

If the conceptual history of conservation belongs to the main stream of the formation of modern rationality, this will admit of verification in the forms of opposition to the principle of self-preservation. The denial of what modernity counts as the advance made by its consciousness of actuality will have to set itself into relation with the principle of self-preservation and be formulated in terms thereof.

The clearest indicator of this will be the manner in which theological eschatology is required to take account of the new principle in its pronouncements and arguments. The fate of the world can no longer be the acceleration of a process of running down which is, all the same, natural and immanent. The organic conception of the world all but became obsolete after organic reality had turned out to be a tiny province of the physically interpretable universe. The ar-

<sup>69</sup> G. W. Leibniz, *Dynamica* II. Section 1, in, *Mathematische Schriften*, ed. by C. J. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1977), VII. 437. The *Dynamica*, which originating in Rome in 1689, is as much the result of his first acquaintance with reports of Newton's *Principia* as of his critique of Descartes' principle of the conservation of the sum of motion. Leibniz explicitly stresses the element of divine conservation in his rejection of this principle, which element comes more into play with the Cartesians than with Descartes himself: "...about the natural law, according to which they (that is, the Cartesians) always wish to have the same quantity of motion to be conserved by God..." (Compare *ibid.*, 117. Leibniz makes only a minor change, omitting the subject of conservation: "...it is consonant with reason that the same sum of motive potential be conserved in the universe..." (1686). He sees in the relativity of motion the decisive reason for abandoning the quantity of motion in favor of motive force as subject of the law of constancy: "The final reason, however is that motion itself is not in itself something absolute and real." Leibniz expresses the consequence of his principle of the conservation of energy in terms of a regression from act to potency as follows: "There is always the same potency in the universe." (*ibid.*, 440)

<sup>70</sup> G. W. Leibniz, *Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum*, in, *Philosophische Schriften* IV. 360; or *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays*, p. 30.

gument for mere self-preservation — namely that its facticity is the sole reason for its further existence — may be a weak result for meeting the demand of a sufficient cause of the existence of this world. It is, nonetheless, at the same time the only sufficient reason. The God who has made the end of this world the content of this revelation comes to assume a role which is comparable to his indecency toward the ancient cosmos. One must recall the apocryphal scene in which Paul announced the destruction of the world by fire to the emperor Nero and the emperor flew into such a raging fury that he in return ordered the burning of the Christians and the execution of Paul. This was although he only confronted the good Stoic *ekpyrosis* of the cosmos, certainly without the consolation of the return of the same from the renewed productive force of the fire.<sup>71</sup> The Medieval concept of contingency had reversed the position of God and world. Continual creation, as the embodiment of preservation, was the only basis of the not-not-being of the world. The force for existing through oneself became an exclusively divine attribute<sup>72</sup> which lent support to the permanence of the world only momentarily. By way of contrast, modern theology practices eschatology under the presupposition that destruction intervenes upon a world which continues to exist on its own accord. It assumes that what is without question there of itself is anticipatorily put into question for every future moment. This alters the language of eschatology, its radicality, and its extensity and intensity.

I propose to show this by means of a widely read book of the eighteenth century, Johann Friedrich Weitenkampf, *Lehrgebäude vom Untergang der Erde* of 1754.<sup>73</sup> The end of the world is minimized:

Who could avoid doubting that God could possibly possess the highest wisdom if He were to bring forth such a marvelously large world for such a short time, for a few thousand years, and thereupon entirely destroy this masterpiece of His omnipotence.<sup>74</sup>

The magnitude of the universe has become an argument against the totality of eschatological events, the revelation of which is, after all,

<sup>71</sup> Passio S. Pauli, Chapter 7, in, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. by Richard Adelbert Lipsius and Maximilian Bonnet (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1972), I. 30: "Upon hearing this Nero became enflamed with anger, because Paul had said that the form of the world was to be destroyed with fire, and commanded that all soldiers of Christ be cremated with fire..." For the Christian protest against the reproach of delight over the end of the world, compare my "Das dritte Höhlengleichnis," in, *Studi e Ricerche di Storia della Filosofia* XXXIX (Turin: Edizioni di Filosofia, 1961), p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> So also Descartes, *Meditationes* III. 33, in, *Oeuvres* VII. 50; or *Works*, I. 169.

<sup>73</sup> Johann Friedrich Weitenkampf, *Lehrgebäude vom Untergang der Erde*, Second edition (Braunschweig: Schröder, 1762), cited herein. Weitenkampf, a Magister of philosophy in Helmstedt, died in 1758.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, II. §42. 110.

relevant for man, who has become only a small part of this universe. The recantation of this enormous expenditure would lead to the self-contradiction of the creative instance.

His goodness would also be eclipsed if he were to reduce the material world to its former nothingness. For who could derive the infinite inclination of God to bestow upon his creatures as many perfections as possible from this act? God is beneficent through creation and preservation, but not through destruction.

If, however, the worthiness of the universe to exist is contrary to the thought of a total destruction, how then can eschatology still be justified in relation to man? Here Weitenkampf uses an argument familiar to the age of theodicy, albeit with limitations, namely the offensiveness of the immensity of the punishment of hell. The justness as well as the eternity of this punishment is certainly upheld, and likewise the premise that the majority of mankind unquestionably belong to the mass of the damned. Weitenkampf, however, succeeds in integrating eschatology into theodicy precisely on account of this insistence. An end must once be made to the continued existence and the increase of mankind so that damnation does not go on into infinity.

The number of the damned would be so amazingly large, that it would exceed the power of human reason. It would necessarily make God into a cruel creator... Help, eternal God! How great the number of damned souls would become! How would it be possible for God to be infinitely beneficent if the world were to stand forever?<sup>75</sup>

The convergence of the two arguments — in favor of the continued existence of the world as a whole on the one hand, and against the continued existence of humanity on the other — may sound astonishing enough. It nonetheless serves the author in that God, who he allows to impose damnation justly, at least does not have to destroy His entire work arbitrarily. His sympathy with the unborn members of a humanity overwhelmingly worthy of damnation maintains the expectation of the end of history as a hope without burdening the account of theodicy with the annihilation of a world which manifestly can be conceived independently from its relation to the existence of mankind.

Now if everyone would consider whether he had good cause to believe that God would allow this meeting place of all sins and vices to continue in its present circumstances for a long time or whether His infinite love would not continually drive him to put an end to it as soon as divine wisdom required... Since, however, the world has stood so long and the number of the lost has astonishingly increased, since furthermore there is no longer hope that the human race will ever change, and since the end of the earth is a means of preventing this evil, we have all the more reason to expect the last day soon rather than to postpone it much longer.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, I. § 16. 60f.



The principle of economy in his eschatology allows Weitenkampf to satisfy the requirements of the implications of preservation which had become irreproachable. Only that takes place which is necessary to make the earth inhospitable for the propagation of mankind. Viewed in terms of the entire universe, the eschatological events are of minor, superficial effect. The background of Copernican influence is unmistakable. That which is a matter of life or death for the history of man is cosmically meaningless.

This, however, is a bad and unimpressive heavenly body if one compares it with other works of nature which radiate in the immeasurable space of the heavens. What sort of an inference would it be to conclude that, since the earth must hence pass away, the other heavenly bodies must also pass away. What would move the Almighty to destroy heaven in its entirety for the sake of such a small planet which others in our universe already surpass in magnificence, and which perhaps means little in the eyes of God among so many thousand other, more artful worlds?<sup>77</sup>

Even the old idea of rescuing the cataclysmic eschatological events from an internal theological contradiction by conceiving them as a mere prelude to a second creation of a new heaven and earth (an idea which, in connection with continual creation would not have been worth the fuss) runs, according to Weitenkampf, counter to any eschatological economy and must be considered as one of the pure 'excesses.' "He creates in fact no new world but only rejuvenates the old one."<sup>78</sup> One can here *a fortiori* infer how foreign to Weitenkampf the thought of a preservation through a continual creation was when he could not even concede a measure of that type of creation for eschatology. The changes necessary to satisfy the requirements of Biblical texts must be laboriously wrested from the preponderance of the principle of preservation, with the concession of the most minimal interventions. The continued existence of the physical world belongs to the conditions of the happiness of immortal spirits (thus of the few capable of escaping damnation).

The material world is thus once again a means for satisfying God's infinite inclination for the happiness of his creatures. This infinite inclination endures forever. Thus, the means must also endure forever . . . If God would destroy the physical world, He would rob spirits of a sort of pleasure and

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., IV. §105. 299f. The author does not notice that, given his presuppositions, the happiness of creatures has already been abandoned as the goal of creation and is no longer usable as an argument: "Everyone would conclude from this that God could never have created the world for the happiness of his creatures if the number of the damned could increase so alarmingly and should not cease to be augmented throughout all eternity."

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., I. §11. 22.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., II. §46. 120.

thus deprive them of a great part of their happiness. Their beatific condition would thereby not be complete, and the inclination of God would thus not be satisfied. Thus, He will most certainly not destroy the physical world.<sup>79</sup>

The enduring world requires no assistance or additional input of energy in order to exist eternally as a means for the happiness of the blessed. That the heavens have sunk deeper on account of their great age and that the great celestial bodies have converted upon each other because of a loss of force,

... until finally the entire heavens would fall in like an old house or an old wagon... would come to lie upon the earth, *such* frailty in the old age of the world is the play of the imagination. There always remains the same measure of forces in the world. One would deceive himself if he were to believe that the forces of the world age, disappear, or decrease from year to year.<sup>80</sup>

Thus with the integration of the principle of self-preservation into the modern consciousness of the world, the self-evidence of eschatology as a theology seeking hope is yet determined by the fact that the episodic character of the world has become objectionable because the violation of this self-preservation of the whole requires an 'omnipotence' which cannot be justified. It is only the futility of the performance of salvation for the majority of mankind which still bears the eschatological thought as a sort of residual postulate of theodicy. At the same time it allows this process to degenerate into an inner-worldly punctual identity with humanity.

## VII

The negation of self-preservation has assumed its romantic form. With the idea of self-destruction it breaks with the mere "and-so-forth" in terms of which the theory of progress of the Enlightenment had sought to conceive as well as outline human history. The everydayness of a history thus conceived ends with the festival of all festivals, with the wonderful cataclysm, as Friedrich Schlegel noted in the Fragments of 1800:<sup>81</sup> "The vocation of man is to destroy (*zerstören*) himself... He must, however, indeed become worthy of it, which he is not at present." The attempt to force the world back into the organic conception of the whole, which was left behind at the beginning of the history of the concept of self-preservation, leads

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., I. §28. 85f.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., II. §40. 105f.

<sup>81</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Fragmente*, Nos. 585, 589, and 592, in, Kritische Ausgabe XVIII, ed. by Ernst Behler (Zürich: Ferdinand Schoenigh Thomas Verlag, 1963), 174f.

to a peculiar translation of this notion into self-creation. This is what the romanticist physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter (to whom Walter Benjamin attributes "the most significant personal prose of German romanticism") indicates:

All things which exist preserve themselves organically. Every stone comes to be anew at every moment, creating itself on into infinity. The parents of the child, however, die immediately ever and ever again. Thus, the individual does not appear and grow. If one can cancel the annihilation, the new is added to the old which persists, and actual propagation and increase take place."<sup>82</sup>

Self-preservation is thus only the show of an organic growth which is capable only of matching the losses within the presumably inorganic. As a rational principle self-preservation is negated precisely in this conception. The negation is understood as the overstepping of a concept of the world which is too impoverished.

This other possibility of the negation of self-preservation, as its transgression, already takes the expression 'self-preservation' as a metaphor for the mere economy of resignation to the given. Nietzsche will insist upon the thought of the *most highly ridiculous economy* of self-preservation — "...because this instinct constitutes *the essence* of our species, our herd."<sup>83</sup> Hobbes, however, had already allowed for the ambiguity in the determination of the will that mere self-preservation is the purport of its goals, on the one hand, and the intensification of power, on the other.<sup>84</sup> For Nietzsche, the biological drive for self-preservation represents a universal principle in its dubious quality. This drive is already viewed as the substrate of the most advanced sublimations when Nietzsche says of it that, "From time to time this instinct...erupts as reason and the passion of spirit," and then has, "a resplendent retinue of reasons and tries with all the force at its command to make us forget that at bottom it is instinct, drive, folly, lack of reasons." The drive for self-preservation is to be attributed to an inconsistency of Spinoza who here neglected the economy of method, namely of *looking out for superfluous teleological principles*.<sup>85</sup> Nietzsche could not see that for Spinoza just this

<sup>82</sup> Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Fragmente aus dem Nachlaß eines jungen Physikers: Ein Taschenbuch für Freunde der Natur*, Auswahl (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1968), No. 64, p. 12. For Walter Benjamin's characterization of the Preface to the *Fragmente*, see *Angelus Novus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 176. In addition, see Walter Benjamin's letter of March 5, 1924 to G. Scholem in *Briefe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1966), I, p. 343: "By contrast, Novalis is a soap box orator."

<sup>83</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* I. 1, in *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta (Munich: Karl Hanser, 1966), II. 32, or *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 73.

<sup>84</sup> Compare K.-H. Ilting, "Hobbes und die praktische Philosophie," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 72 (1964), 100.

<sup>85</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* I. 13, in *Werke* II. 578; or *Complete Works*,



had to be the embodiment of methodical economy over against the Scholastic-Cartesian continual creation. Nietzsche himself perceived an excess in this because he believed that he had found a more comprehensive principle. This was, of course, as for the romantics, once again only a principle of the living in the face of which, for Nietzsche, all physics pales. If life is the will to power, then self-preservation is *only one of the indirect and most frequent consequences thereof*, and thus a secondary and diluted derivative. A new, energetic metaphoric of life was in preparation which would find its conversion into the apparatus of a psychic model in the libidinous 'life energy' of Sigmund Freud. Nietzsche's version runs as follows: "Every animal, including *la bête philosophe*, strives instinctively for the optimum conditions under which it may release its powers," and attains its maximum in the feeling of power.<sup>86</sup> As a background metaphor, the conception of a gas standing under high pressure appears to determine the course of thought which goes beyond self-preservation. It is important, however, that for Nietzsche such a release of force explicitly has nothing to do with the achievement of happiness nor is it permitted to have anything to do with it: "The path I am speaking of does not lead to 'happiness,' but to power, to the most energetic activity, and in a majority of cases to actual unhappiness." The world is no longer the 'animal' which is referred to, but rather the philosopher.

The traditional dispute about the alternative to the preeminence of the principle of self-preservation and pleasure was decided for a century by Nietzsche's critique: "A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength — life itself is will to power." At the beginning of modernity, the physical schema of preservation as the impersonal *conservari*, as *perseveratio*, had displaced the transitive theological model of Scholastic conservation as well as the organic model of the conservation of oneself, present with, of course, the almost impossible to overcome metaphoric residue of the force of inertia. The result of this process was, for its own part, the vanishing point of new oppositions. But from this aspect, it only becomes clearer to what extent pronouncements on intransitive preservation lie at the basis of modern rationality.

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ed. by Oscar Levy, XII (*Beyond Good and Evil*), trans. Helen Zimmern (London and Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1914), p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral* III. 7, in *Werke* II. 848; or *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), p. 242.

## TRANSLATION NOTES

- i* First act.
- ii* Second act.
- iii* Reality.
- iv* Perfection.
- v* Conservation.
- vi* Mode.
- vii* Forces of inertia.
- viii* Remaining in its present state.
- ix* Changing its present state.
- x* Jean Formey, *La Belle Wolfienne*, 6 vols. (The Hague: J. Neaulme, 1746).
- xi* Compare Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile ou De l'Education*, ed. by F. and P. Richard (Paris: Editions Garnier, 1964), pp. 6n, 7n, 139n, 196n, 294n, and 297n.
- xii* Conservation.
- xiii* Jean Formey, "Conservation" in, *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts, et des Métiers par une Société de gens de lettres*, V. (Paris: Livourne, 1777), 34.
- xiv* Motive force.
- xv* Continual creation.
- xvi* I think, therefore I am.
- xvii* Force, action.
- xviii* Permanent force.
- xix* Persevere.
- xx* Striving.
- xxi* Forces conserving themselves.
- xxii* Motion toward greater density.
- xxiii* World harmony.
- xxiv* Spirit.
- xxv* Tone.
- xxvi* Mind and matter.
- xxvii* *On the Nature of things*.
- xxviii* *Die Natur* in text.
- xxix* Original appropriation.
- xxx* Original impulse.
- xxxi* To live in contradiction.

xxxii Art of living.

xxxiii Necessary being.

xxxiv Cause of itself.

xxxv Latin and Greek: to be moved.

xxxvi Nature.

xxxvii St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* III. 23. argument 6, in, (Latin), III. 28; or (English), III. 90.

xxxviii Where.

xxxix Source.

xl St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae (De Potentia)*, II. 57-58, or, *On the Power of God*, 130f.

xli The power to make and to conserve all things. St. Augustine, *Oeuvres* 48. 309-09.

xlii He is the cause of subsistence for every creature. Compare St. Augustine, *Oeuvres* 48. 308f.

xliii ... and conversely.

xliv House builder and house building.

xlv The most efficacious way.

xlvi Relative potency and absolute potency.

xlvii Striving.

xlviii Creative fire and noncreating fire.

xlix Beautiful dissertations.

l To be conserved.

li The author actually discusses the difference between the two forms of causality on pp. 172 and 173 and it might be useful for the reader to consider the definitions of these terms as they are given on these pages. Thus, on p. 172, he says of 'accompanying causality': "The Aristotelian-Scholastic concept of causality does not recognize the process as a given fact. It requires an immediately intervening factor for every phase of a motion or change. I designate this basic conception 'accompanying causality.' It implies for cosmology not only the necessity of new causation at each moment even for a constant process, but also the impossibility of action across a distance (*actio per distans*)."

On p. 173 he says the following of 'transmitted causality':

"How was it possible then that Copernicus could nevertheless claim his reform to be cosmological truth? The answer must be: Because there already existed late Medieval equivalents for both elements, for gravity the conception of the common striving of homologous parts (*appetentia partium*), for inertia the concept of *impetus* which I here more generally introduce as 'transmitted causality.'

lii For the quotation from Kant, compare *Werke*, Akademie-Textausgabe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), II. 20.



Reviews  
and  
Review Articles



## THE QUESTION ABOUT BEING AND ITS FOUNDATION IN LANGUAGE\*

A Review Article on  
Charles H. Kahn, *The Verb "Be" in Ancient Greek*

Ernst Tugendhat  
Translated by David Mallon

In whatever way we may attempt a new conception of the fundamental questions of philosophy at present, we will have to take a positive or negative position with respect to the conceptual tradition into which we have been born, a tradition essentially determined by Plato and Aristotle. For them the question about being (*Sein*) was the fundamental question of philosophy.

In modern times there are two forms in which this conception has been rejected and likewise two forms in which it has been further developed. It has been rejected from one side because it was held to be inappropriate in content (impracticable, irrelevant, or ideologically conditioned). According to this view, the fundamental question of philosophy does not concern being but, for instance, knowledge, man, history, society, language, or the good life. A second rejection does not maintain that being is the wrong theme but that it is no theme at all because the word "being" has no unitary meaning. The tradition of the question about being (*Seinsfrage*) has been further developed in our time, first by scholastic philosophy and the philosophers closely connected with it. They could appear immune to the second critique since they were not oriented toward the word "being" ("is") but toward a concept, *being*, which along with its differentiations was provided by tradition and had thus attained the status of a *terminus technicus*, thereby appearing superior to the irregularities of the prephilosophical use of the word. The second positive reception of this word is restricted to a single philosopher, Heidegger. His question about being does not stand in continuity with the tradition, but rather resulted from a reaction to those newer themes which had taken its place. The questions about knowledge, history, and so forth, which had claimed to be more fundamental than those

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\* Translated from "Die Seinsfrage und ihre sprachliche Grundlage," in *Philosophische Rundschau* 24 (1977): 161-76. The essay by Charles H. Kahn herein reviewed appears in, John W. M. Verhaar (Ed.), *The Verb "Be" and its Synonyms*, Part 6 (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1973), xxxiii + 486 pp.



about being, would (according to Heidegger) for their part remain without foundation if the being of knowledge, the being of history, and so forth, were not to be questioned. But whoever uses the word "being" in such a way no longer follows the Aristotelian tradition. For this reason Heidegger begins his book *Being and Time* with the citation from Plato (directed by Heidegger against the traditional adherents of the question about being as well as against its thematic critics): "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression 'being.' We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed," and then himself concludes, "it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of being." Now one would have expected that whoever asks the question about being in such a way, that is, whoever, in opposition to the scholastic tradition, returns to language for the understanding of the expression "being,"<sup>1</sup> would first have to confront the second critique of the question about being, namely, the doubt whether the word "being" has a unitary meaning at all. Therefore it is extremely remarkable that Heidegger has passed over this problem and has immediately gone on to the question about *the* meaning of being (*dem Sinn des Seins*), as though it were obvious that there is such a thing at all and that such a question has an identifiable meaning. Thus his question that was supposed to provide a foundation for everything else remained itself without foundation. Nevertheless, almost an entire generation in Germany was swept along by it. It is even more remarkable that a clarification of the linguistic doubts about the question of being has not been undertaken elsewhere before now. The book by Kahn is more than a contribution to this problematic. To be sure, I would not like to say that it conclusively solves the problem; I cannot even agree with its conclusions. But the relevant material is so comprehensively and thoroughly prepared in it that now for the first time there is a basis for taking an appropriate positive or negative position.

In 1966 the author had already made a first attempt at this problem in his article "The Greek Verb 'to be' and the Concept of Being."<sup>2</sup> Then, due to the philological and linguistic demands that he had placed upon himself, its elaboration grew into an unexpectedly comprehensive and lengthy investigation, which was finally completed in 1971. In an article appearing in the same year as the book, "On the Theory of the Verb 'To Be,'"<sup>3</sup> Kahn gives a short summary of his results.

The investigation is restricted to the language in which the question about being originated, Ancient Greek, and here again it is essentially restricted to that time, or rather, to the texts of that time, that had not yet been influenced by philosophy. The main emphasis is placed on the Homeric epics, which Kahn claims to have covered in their entirety. In the introduction a short presentation of the use of the word in English is also provided. The whole investigation is arranged in such a way that the clarification of the particulars of the Greek is not

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 11th ed. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), p. 1; or John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans., *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations of language* 2 (1966), pp. 245-65.

<sup>3</sup> In Milton K. Munitz (Ed.), *Logic and Ontology* (New York: New York University Press, 1973), pp. 1-20.

an end in itself, but, rather, as much light as possible is shed on the relative status of the corresponding expressions in the other Indo-European languages. In the course of this investigation Kahn also occasionally refers to non-Indo-European languages for contrast.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first three serve as an introduction; here, among other things, the reader is informed of the syntactic method that will be used, namely, the transformational grammar of Z. Harris. In the fourth chapter in one hundred pages Kahn describes the uses of *εἰμί* [be] as a copula; in the fifth he gives a "theory of the copula" based upon these descriptions. The sixth chapter distinguishes the various uses of *εἰμί* that can be described as existential, and in addition considers other non-copulative meanings: the possessive construction (§12) and, a peculiarity of the Greek, the use of *εἰμί* with the infinitive as a potential construction (§17). The seventh chapter is dedicated to the use of the word that Kahn characterizes as the veridical use ("it is so" ["as you say"]). The concluding chapter is the most important and, if one is only interested in the results of the book, he can confine himself to this chapter. It treats the system of the various meanings.

What are the questions that have to be asked concerning such an undertaking? The first is: What meanings of *εἰμί* really have to be distinguished? In answer to this question, Kahn only allows such distinctions as can be established syntactically. The second question is: How is each of these meanings, considered separately, to be understood? The third: Does a system exist among them and does one possibly have some kind of primacy? Fourth, and finally (the original question): Can this system, if it exists, justify talk of a concept of being? and/or can it support the view that this particular constellation in Indo-European is a happy accident for philosophy? Kahn will answer this question in the affirmative; I will answer it in the negative. But first we must see how he answers the preceding questions.

### The Various Meanings of "Be"

Traditionally two main meanings have been distinguished in linguistics: the use as a copula and the absolute use in the sense of existence, which in Greek is more pronounced than in modern languages (compare, "*es gibt*," "exists"). Furthermore, particularly in philosophical discussions about the ambiguity of "be" ("*sein*"), the use in the sense of identity, usually subsumed under the copula in linguistics, is also distinguished as a distinct meaning.

Kahn sets himself off from this traditional background; first, because for the first time he systematically exhibits the veridical use as the third main meaning. A second enrichment of the descriptive panorama is found in the emphasis (following Lyons<sup>4</sup>) of the locative copula ("Ephyre is there / is in Argos"), which can be seen as a connecting link between the nominal copula and existence. A third point is negative: Kahn rejects the "is" of identity as a distinct meaning because allegedly there is no syntactic criterion for distinguishing this use from the copula (VIII, notes 1, p. 372, and 33, pp. 400-01). But it was precisely this ambiguity between the copula and identity that had been most sharply den-

<sup>4</sup> J. Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 8.4 "Existential, locative and possessive constructions," pp. 388-99.

ounced from a critical philosophical direction (see Kahn, p. 4), precisely because it is so inconspicuous syntactically. It was this ambiguity that in the history of philosophy twice led to the most serious confusions, first in the arguments of the Sophists and then, at a time of renewed logical barbarism, in German Idealism. Surely there is a criterion for distinguishing the "is" of identity from the copula. In an expression of the form "*A is B*," the word "is" functions as a copula if either *A* or *B* is a general term but as a sign of identity if *A* as well as *B* are singular terms. If the syntax used by Kahn cannot distinguish between singular and general terms, then one can only say so much the worse for this syntax as an instrument for exposing formal semantic distinctions.

A syntactically clearer formulation of the same criterion is that if the "is" in "*A is B*" functions as a sign of identity, it is replaceable by "is identical with," and otherwise not, and the "is" in this latter expression is a copula.<sup>5</sup> Therefore there may of course also be languages (I don't know whether there actually are any, but the languages of formal logic would be an example) which use a special sign of identity that is also distinguished externally from the copula and the non-copulative nominal construction. The misunderstanding of the Sophists and of German Idealism, however, consisted in the fact that for their part they interpreted the copula as though this "is" meant the same as "is identical with."

#### "Be" in the Sense of Existence

I now come to the second question, how each of the respective meanings considered separately is to be understood. I will begin with the use in the sense of existence because it involves a direct continuation of the first question, namely, a further distinguishing of various meanings. Kahn brings to light a surprising wealth of usages of "is," all of which one is inclined to understand as somehow existential, but which nevertheless cannot easily be subsumed under one concept. Therefore, they are well-suited to make us aware of how little we have hitherto understood what we meant by this sense of "is." Kahn distinguishes five types in Homer.

The first type (VI, §6) has the syntactic form: noun + "be" + a temporal determination, for example, "He is no longer." Kahn calls this the vital use: "be" here seems to have the sense of "live." To me this interpretation seems too narrow. Kahn himself indicates that this same construction also occurs with nouns that do not stand for living creatures, for example, "Troy is no more." His explanation that it is here a matter of "poetical extension" (243) is not convincing. For then how would the same state of affairs be expressed without poetical metaphor? Apparently language needs a word for the persistence of all beings that come to be and pass away, namely, a word for their presence in time. In modern languages the word "exist" is used for this purpose, but in a way that cannot be understood (or, in any case, not directly) with the help of the existential quantifier of logic. Rather than to speak of a vital use, we thus do better to speak of being in the sense of "temporal existence." In the case of living creatures this existing consists in living,<sup>6</sup> but this is only a special case, even

<sup>5</sup> See G. Frege, "Begriff und Gegenstand," *Vierteljahresschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie* 16 (1892), 199; or Peter Geach and Max Black (eds.), *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), pp. 49-51.

<sup>6</sup> See Aristotle, *De Anima* 415 b13.



though it is the most interesting for us humans and therefore occurs the most frequently by far in the prescientific language. Consideration of beings other than humans also keeps us from orienting ourselves, with Kahn, toward homeric mythology for the understanding of this *ἐστὶ* [is]. When a person is no longer living, he nonetheless is still somewhere according to the Greek outlook, namely, in Hades. Thus it could seem that one might understand this being as an ordinary attribute that something can lose without absolutely disappearing. But there is no Hades for Troy (or for animals, either), not even in Homer and, already in Aristotle, not even for humans. This makes it difficult to understand this sense of "be" correctly.<sup>7</sup>

The second type (VI, §§7-10) does not have a syntactically precise form. An example is "There is a city Ephyre in Argos, in which . . ." Kahn indicates that this form is only distinguished by word order and/or by the indefinite pronoun *τις* from a corresponding copulative form: "The city Ephyre is in Argos." Whereas this copulative-locative sentence says where an object, presupposed as known, is located (such is Kahn's plausible explanation), the function of the existential variant is to introduce an object into the context of speech by locating it (257). For this reason these sentences do not have a negative form.

Following Lyons (in the work cited) Kahn interprets the possessive construction of *εἰμί* (it is to him [his]) as a variant of this locative-existential construction: instead of naming the place, the person to whom something belongs is named (VI, §12). But of course the possessive construction also occurs in a negative form, and this is connected with the fact that it does not have the function of introducing something into the context of speech. This supports the view that the possessive construction is not a variant specifically of the locative-existential construction but of the locative construction in general. And this, in turn, provides support for also understanding the copulative-locative form as existential. Then a connection between Kahn's Type I and Type II would suggest itself. Kahn himself indicates (143) that Type I sometimes occurs with a determination of place instead of a temporal determination. ("Sisyphus lived [was] there.") Would it not then be consistent to understand the *εἰμί* in type I as a quasi copula, in the same way as the locative copula? This view, which had already been proposed by Lyons, is rejected by Kahn for reasons that do not seem convincing to me (see the note on p. 245).

The third type (VI, §11), according to Kahn, represents a variant of the second type, except that the subject is plural and is modified by a quantifier like "many" or "other." An example of it is "There are also other women in Achaia." But since Frege we know that a plural grammatical subject should not be understood semantically as a subject. Kahn remarks that as long as we do not have a general theory of quantifier words we can only with difficulty explain such sentences (263). But still it at least seems clear that this sentence type no longer is a variant of an elementary sentence with a copula and that it can only be understood semantically with the help of the existential quantifier.

This leads to Kahn's fourth type (VI, §14), which has the form: *ἐστὶ ὅς* + a relative clause, for example, "There is no one who escapes death." Here the *ἐστὶ* corresponds to the existential quantifier in logic. This sentence form is, there-

<sup>7</sup> See my article "Existence in Space and Time," *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 8 (1975), 19-33, and my *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die sprachanalytische Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), p. 468.

fore, semantically easiest to understand.

In the fifth type (VI, §15) the ἔστι stands for the occurrence of an event, for example, "There was around him a clamor of the dead." Here the occurrence of an event seems to be established relative to a pregiven spatio-temporal context in a way analogous to how the occurrence of a spatial object is established in the locative construction. Yet the principles of Kahn's transformational grammar do not permit such an assimilation. "A/the clamor of the dead" is derived from "The dead clamored," and every nominalization stands for an abstract object. But are events always designated by nominalizations? Where Kahn sees himself confronted with an action noun that is not of this kind (for example, "morning," ἡώς), he claims that there "must" once have been a corresponding verb ("it morrows?"). The principle on which Kahn relies is that only those nouns are elementary that stand for material objects (290), a principle which he does not justify but simply borrows from Harris (I, §§7f). D. Davidson has given solid semantic and surely formal – but indeed not syntactic – reasons showing that one has to acknowledge that events are objects just as irreducible and concrete as material objects.<sup>8</sup> Kahn's opinion that a syntactic transformational theory of elementary sentences can replace a "logical grammar" and thus a formal semantics (p. 15) (15) does not seem to me at all justified, even if this syntax is for its part semantically founded. Unfortunately, Kahn has merely stated, not established, the syntactic principles and rules on which he bases his investigation (I, §§6f). The difference between expressions standing for concrete objects and those standing for abstract objects cannot be defined morphologically through the word form but only semantically through the way in which the objects are identified, or more precisely through their criteria of identity. Although one surely must agree with Kahn that the occurrence (being) of an event may not simply be assimilated to the occurrence (being) of a spatial object, and although the fact of the nominalization may provide a hint of the distinction, I must still reject resolutely Kahn's subsumption of events under abstract objects (308, 413). Events, but not abstract objects, occur in space and time, and are identified in this way.

Finally Kahn mentions a sixth type (VI, §§18, 21f), which, however, did not yet exist in Homer and first comes into use in the fifth century. Examples are οὐδ' ἔστι Ζεὺς [There is no Zeus] and εἰσὶ θεοί [There are gods]. The first example seems at first glance to be syntactically similar to the first type; yet, a temporal modification cannot occur in it. It does not mean that Zeus does not now live but that there is no such being at all. What is involved here are those existential sentences that have been regarded as clear existential propositions in the modern discussion (for example, by Russell). It is an important result of Kahn's investigations that in Greek as well as in Sanscrit such existential propositions first arose through philosophy (304). For in such a sentence it is not doubted or claimed that there is an object of such and such a kind, which . . . , but that there is an object of such and such a kind, that is, the "validity of an entire tradition" is placed in doubt (304).<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, this sixth type is

<sup>8</sup> See D. Davidson "The Logical Form of Action Sentences," in *The Logic of Decision and Action*, Nicholas Rescher, Ed. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966), pp. 81-95, and "The Individuation of Events," in *Essays in Honor of Carl G. Hempel*, Nicholas Rescher and others (eds.), (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1969), pp. 216-34.

<sup>9</sup> This may not be clear at first glance if one thinks of examples like Russell's "the king

naturally on the same level semantically as the fourth type.

Kahn's explanation of the meaning of the existential *ἔστι*, which he sees embodied above all in the fourth and fifth type, that it "poses" a descriptive content as present in the world (VI, §20), seems to me to fall short of the results of the modern discussion of existence. I of course also cannot go along with Kahn's combination of the fourth and fifth types. In my opinion the first, second, and fifth types belong closely together, as do the third, fourth, and sixth. In sentences of this second group it is said that there are objects, an object, many objects, other objects, or objects of some kind in space and time, whereas in sentences of the first group, the presence of an object is located spatiotemporally. It seems to me, however, that the descriptive separation of these six types is justified and that the elaboration of them is a significant result of Kahn's investigation.

### The Copula and the Veridical Use

The transformational grammar approach enables Kahn to establish that in Greek the nominal sentence is a phenomenon of the surface structure and that in the deep structure there is no sentence without a verb (III, §2 and Appendix B). Thus not only does he reject the diachronic "myth" of a subsequent transference to the nominal sentence of the word *es-*, which allegedly only meant existence in the original Indo-European language, but also he contests the synchronic theory that the copula is an appearance of the surface structure in sentences the deep structure of which is a nominal sentence (195). This deep structure is not at all conceivable if it does not already contain the aspects that are expressed by the copula (V, §5). What are these aspects? First, the verb in Indo-European is the bearer of the marks for person, tense and, in particular, mood. For this reason the construction that otherwise would be a nominal sentence needs a verb (V, §2). But *εἰμί* is not an otherwise empty bearer of these marks. Rather (as Kahn shows, following Lyons) it stands in contrast with another copula, *γίνομαι* [become]. *Εἰμί* is a bearer of a static aspect (V, §3). With regard to this property, *εἰμί*, with both the locative and the nominal completion, is merely the most important of a small group of other static copulative expressions: *stand, lie, sit* (V, §§6, 12). Kahn shows that one can recognize that the meaning of these words, insofar as they are not used as copulas, is interconnected with the vital use of *εἰμί*. The being-located-somewhere of a living creature expressed in this use of *εἰμί* is specified regarding a definite position when we say that it lies, stands, or sits. Each of these words can take a locative completion, thereby becoming a locative copula, and finally can also take a nominal completion. In this way *εἰμί* assumes the central position in this system since it expresses the being-located in abstraction from a definite posture.

Thus an interconnection between copula and existence has already become apparent, and we can similarly recognize an interconnection between the copula and the veridical use if we follow Kahn's thesis that the copula is a "sign of

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of France." Corrections of false presuppositions (for example, "Your wife..." / "My wife does not exist.") are surely not philosophical, and certainly they always existed before philosophy. Granted, but in Greek they would take the possessive or locative construction. It is only in the case of proper nouns ("Homer") that we have a new state of affairs, and indeed precisely because it implicates a tradition.



predication" (396). Kahn distinguishes three concepts of predication (226f, 396f). As "predication<sub>1</sub>" he designates the "function" of the copula *ἐστί*: It indicates that an attribute (property, place, and so forth) belongs to an object. By "predication<sub>2</sub>" the same fact is designated, regardless whether it is rendered by a copula alone or is expressed by another verb. Finally, "predication<sub>3</sub>" is supposed to express quite generally the "truth claim" of a declarative sentence, even if this sentence does not have the subject-predicate form. According to Kahn, predication<sub>3</sub> is broader than predication<sub>2</sub>, and predication<sub>2</sub> (obviously) is broader than predication<sub>1</sub>. All three are supposed to be expressed by the copulative *ἐστί*.

This view contains several difficulties. The periphrastic transformation is supposed to show that the copulative *ἐστί* can also express the more general concept of predication<sub>2</sub> (214). The logical tradition of philosophy has indeed made use of the periphrastic transformation since Aristotle ("He swims" is transformed into "He is swimming"). But does this transformation contain the full original sense? Precisely Kahn's reference to the static aspect of *εἶμι* goes against this. In the periphrastic transformation the verb loses the kinetic aspect proper to it if it belongs to those verbs that Kenny has designated as performative.<sup>10</sup> But if the sentence gains a static aspect in the periphrastic transformation, then this means precisely that only a special form of predication<sub>2</sub> is expressed by *ἐστί*.

Considerations with respect to predication<sub>3</sub> are more serious. First, it involves a misleading use of terms. Since a subject-predicate structure is no longer involved, one should not speak of a predication. Rather, what is meant is the mood of the sentence which, in the case of the indicative, makes a truth claim. But, second, it is also not quite correct to say that the declarative mood is simply broader than the predication; rather, these two concepts intersect each other. The indicative copula, or some other indicative predication, does not always make a truth claim. The sentence "He is either stupid or evil" contains two clauses that are both predicative, neither of which makes a truth claim. Only the entire sentence makes one; however, the truth claim does not express itself in a verb, contrary to Kahn's opinion that this must always be the case. Nevertheless, it *can* be expressed by an "is" if, for instance, one refers back to the entire sentence and says "it is so" (*ἐστί οὕτω*), or also if he reformulates the sentence in this way: "It is the case that he is either stupid or evil."

With this we come to the veridical use of *εἶμι*. Kahn distinguishes between the veridical "construction" and the veridical "nuance" (VII, §§2f). What he calls the veridical construction always has the explicit or implicit comparative form: "It is so (as you say)," "May it be so (as you say)," or "So be it (as I command)." This construction thus occurs in all moods. One can speak of a specific veridical aspect (an aspect related to truth) only in the indicative mood. Kahn calls this the veridical "nuance," and this occurs in declarative sentences even apart from the veridical construction. Indeed, it overlaps more or less explicitly the entire use of the copula and even the use of all declarative sentences. This overlapping, or the veridical nuance, is revealed in the *seems/is* contrast, which determines the entire use of declarative sentences

<sup>10</sup> See Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), chap. 8.

(357). In it is revealed what Kahn has called the truth claim of these sentences. As opposed to this implicit veridical nuance already contained in the use of the copulative *ἐστί* of an elementary sentence, the explicit veridical *ἐστί* is a second-order construction the “operand” or subject of which is a nominal sentence. Kahn sees an analogy between the sense of this *ἐστί* and his interpretation of the existential *ἐστί* of the fourth and fifth types, which he likewise conceived as a second-order construction. In this *ἐστί* a descriptive content is “posed” as actual. Kahn gives examples (VII, §3) that show that in Greek one and the same construction (*ταῦτα ἐστί / ὅτε ταῦτα ἦν*) could be used for the truth of a statement (the facticity of a state of affairs) and the occurrence of an event, so that the veridical being seems to be closely connected with the existential being of the fifth type. And yet conceptually one cannot distinguish sharply enough between the concrete (temporal) being of events and the abstract being of states of affairs (facts). A fact does not have a spatio-temporal existence.

### How are these Various Meanings Interconnected?

With regard to the question about the system of the various meanings of “be,” we must distinguish more sharply than Kahn himself the linguistic question — how it can be explained that one and the same word is a bearer of these various meanings — from the philosophical question — whether it is meaningful to speak of a unitary concept of being. The linguistic question is the third of the questions mentioned by me at the outset.

Kahn proposes two sharp theses regarding the linguistic question. First, he criticizes the older linguistic view that in the original Indo-European language “\*es-” had an univocal, concrete meaning in the sense of existence (life, being at a place) and that there was a subsequent genesis of the copula (VIII, §§2f). Second, he also rejects the synchronic variant of this view, which he had still proposed in the 1966 article. He claims that the “system” of the meanings of being can be understood only if one starts with the copula but not if he starts with the existential meanings (397). The demonstration of this thesis, characterized by Kahn as a “modest Copernican Revolution” (395), does not seem to me to be very strong. Granted, it is correct that the existence expressed by the existential quantifier (Kahn’s fourth type) represents a higher order use of *ἐστί* already presupposing predication. Likewise, it seems most natural to regard the veridical *ἐστί* as an extension of the copula’s truth claim. How the vital use should be understood from the perspective of the copula, however, is less clear. Furthermore, it also is unclear why precisely the verbs of posture could unite together around *ἐμὶ* into a unitary system. The most natural view, therefore, seems to be the one proposed by Kahn himself in his earlier article and also in the presentation of the copula in the fifth chapter of the book (see also VIII, §2), namely, to regard as primary the locative construction in its characteristic intermediate position between the copula and existence. From the idea that something is located at a place, one easily arrives (by abstraction from the particular place) at the idea that it is located somewhere (temporal existence). Similarly, by generalizing one arrives at the idea that it is in this or that condition. Kahn is right to stress (389) that the static aspect is fundamental; but this fact in and of itself supports neither the primacy of the one nor of the other. Moreover, the *being/appearance* contrast expressed in the veridical use is a

second aspect that overlaps the *static/kinetic* contrast and is not reducible to it, no more than the latter is reducible to the former.

However one may draw the lines here, one can see that these questions are basically unimportant. What was important was the elaboration of the various meanings. Granted, there are also interconnections, and so one can explain with more or less success how one word can bear these different formal meanings. But since these differences are irreducible, in the end it is of no consequence in this matter whether one starts from one direction or another. But then what about the philosophical concept of being? With this I come to the last and most important question: Is the word "being" a meaningful guide for a fundamental philosophical consideration? Has the particular constellation of meanings of the word "being" in Indo-European and especially in Greek been a happy circumstance for philosophy?

### Being in Philosophy

Kahn answers these questions in the affirmative (VIII, §7). Of course Kahn is not so naive as to speak of *the* concept of being. The constellation provided by Indo-European is not found in other language families, and the special constellation in Greek, in turn, is distinguished from those in other Indo-European languages. Therefore one cannot claim that there is some kind of necessity for there being a single word precisely for these and only these meanings. Moreover, it is clear that these meanings cannot be subsumed under a single meaning. What Kahn claims, therefore, is only the following: 1. The Greek word *εἶμι* is a *πρὸς ἓν* equivocal (401), as Aristotle had already maintained (*Metaphysics* Γ, 2). Its meanings are irreducible but interconnected. 2. The concurrence of precisely these meanings in one word in Greek was "a happy accident" for philosophy (403) and is of "permanent philosophical importance" (402).

It is the second thesis that I would like to contest. The fundamental meanings of *εἶμι* to which Kahn refers are predication, truth (or truth claim), and existence. Appealing to Quine, Kahn indicates that these three concepts are interdependent (405), namely, that it is not possible to explain one of them without thereby referring back to the other two. It is, he says, characteristic of traditional and modern ontology that it has thematized this unitary system that has been (thus) suggested to it by the word "be." Let us put aside the question whether the appeal to Quine is justified. And let us also put aside the doubts that might plague us regarding the conceptual system claimed by Kahn. Let us also assume that it is correct that precisely this system was fundamental for our philosophical tradition. What follows from this with regard to an orientation toward the word "being"? To answer this question we must, as it were, make a profit-loss calculation. On the profit side we will record the extent to which philosophy owes its positive knowledge concerning the aforementioned system to the orientation toward the word "being." And on the loss side we must record the extent to which the orientation toward the word "being" has led philosophy to a false or one-sided understanding of this system.

Let us begin with the asset side. I hold it to be pure speculation to claim that Greek philosophy owes any kind of positive knowledge, or even its own origin, to the particular constellation of meanings of the word *εἶμι* in the Greek language. I don't know how one could decide this question one way or the other.



Why, for example, should one be able to become aware of the predicative structure of elementary sentences only if there is a copula? The copula is certainly not a general characteristic of all predicative sentences. And if one points to the fact that the copula can nonetheless be brought to play this role through periphrastic transformation, it may be asked whether Aristotle did not come upon this way of expression, which after all is quite artificial, only because he had already arrived at the concept of predication independently of it. Furthermore, with regard to the interconnection of predication with existence and truth, one can once again doubt whether the knowledge of such interconnections depends on the use of the same word for them. It surely could also be the reverse. The use of the same word for them could result in one's not even noticing that two different concepts are involved, so that *a fortiori* he also could not recognize the interconnection between these concepts. Thus, for example, the Greek philosophers have been less aware of an interconnection between existence and predication than later philosophers, who had a word different from the copula for the concept of existence.

Let us elucidate this state of affairs by that meaning of "be" that Kahn has so persistently left out, the concept of identity. It seems plausible that there is an interdependence between the concept of predication and the concept of identity similar to that between the concept of predication and the concept of existence.<sup>11</sup> But in spite of the use of the same word for them, the Greek philosophers never arrived at this idea. It required great effort even to distinguish these meanings at all (as can be seen from Plato's *Sophist*). But after they had been distinguished, it did not occur to anyone at that time to claim an interdependence. If many philosophers today are of the opinion that there is such an interdependence, I am unaware that this view was facilitated, let alone established, by the fact that in both cases the word "is" is used. The reasons supporting such an interpretation would be just as easily recognizable if two different words were to be used.

Thus this ledger does not even seem to have an asset side. How about the debit side? Remarkably, Kahn has not at all referred to this side of the ledger. Must we here rely on speculations as uncertain as those concerning the assets? I don't believe so, first, because the confusions caused by the ambiguity of the word "be" has also demonstrably had a limiting effect precisely on the knowledge of the interconnections referred to by Kahn: 1. The division of the predicative sentence into subject + copula + predicate, instead of into subject + predicate (where the copula, if there is one, is part of the predicate), led the entire ontologically determined logic to a false semantics of the predicative structure, first rectified by Frege. 2. The persuasion that the copula is, as it were, the hinge of the predicative structure did not leave any option open for a conception of many-placed predicates. Thus the orientation toward being barred the way to a logic of relations. 3. The orientation toward "being" was responsible for the confining of truth claims, and so of the form of declarative sentences, to the special form of the predicative sentence. This form not only seemed to represent the elementary form but also the general form of a structure capable of truth. Thus the orientation toward "being" obscured the view of the multipli-

<sup>11</sup> See W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), chap. 3, and my *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die sprachanalytische Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), p. 490.

city of the forms of declarative discourse and finally of discourse in general.

Why is it that one can only speculate with uncertainty about the asset side of the ledger, while the debit side presents such a clear and overwhelmingly negative picture? It is due to a certain intrinsic tendency in the way in which philosophy deals with words. Conceptual systems that philosophy wants to explain are sometimes suggested in the constellations of meanings of a language's words, sometimes not. This implies that one cannot determine whether such a conceptual system exists on the basis of an orientation toward a word. Conceptual labor is therefore necessary, one way or the other. If a word already suggests a system, then this labor is only all the more difficult, as it is always more difficult to elucidate a state of affairs if there is already some prejudice about it, even if this prejudice proves correct in the end. With respect to any word whatsoever that has played a role in the history of philosophy, one can be sure that the effect of verbal ambiguity on thinking was always only negative, never positive. Of course, this does not mean that the philosophical labor of conceptual explanation takes place in some dimension transcending language. Concepts are nothing but the usages of words, but the usages of a word and the word itself are two very different things: one and the same word can have different usages, different words can have the same use. The knowledge of a use is always only a result of thinking. In philosophy, therefore, the journey always goes upstream, against the tendencies of words as against the tendencies of other prejudices. One is lost as soon as he pulls in the oars and allows himself to be swept away. Heidegger's dictum that language thinks is one of the most gloomy things that has ever been said in philosophy because it is the declaration of the bankruptcy of all philosophy and the deepest expression of anti-enlightenment.

It follows from what has been said that even if Kahn were right that the constellation of the meanings of *εἶναι* has been a "happy accident" for philosophy (thus if this contingent accident were required for awareness of the conceptual interconnections), it would not follow that the orientation toward "being" is of "permanent importance." We will still be able to learn from the philosophers who have proceeded from the system of meanings that the word "be" has in Greek, not because of, but in spite of, the fact that they have oriented themselves toward it. The expectation that the global orientation toward this word still can result in anything should be rejected in our own and in all future philosophy. With his investigation Kahn has proved the opposite of what he wanted to prove, namely, that the case about "the question of being can be closed if one understands this question as the question about *the* meaning of the word "being," let alone as the question about the meaning of being (*dem Sinn des Seins*) as Heidegger has done, or, in Kahn's terms, as the question about the concept of being. Obviously unaffected by this result is the necessity of orienting oneself toward particular meanings of the word "be," especially toward the veridical meaning, with regard to certain fundamental philosophical questions. It can be considered an important result of Kahn's distinctions that, for example, in the case of such oppositions as that between "is" and "ought" or between the realm of being and the realm of fantasy, "being" has the veridical sense. Also, to be able to understand correctly the philosophers who globally orient themselves toward the word "being," we need the kind of clarifications of the usages of this word that Kahn has exemplarily provided.

L. BRUNO PUNTEL, *DARSTELLUNG, METHODE  
UND STRUKTUR: UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUR EINHEIT  
DER SYSTEMATISCHEN PHILOSOPHIE G. W. F. HEGELS*

Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman, 1973, 357 pp.

Merold Westphal

The central theme of this book is, as the subtitle indicates, the question of the unity of Hegel's systematic philosophy, by which Puntel means the writings from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807 through the *Science of Logic*, the *Encyclopedia*, and the various Berlin lectures. Because of the major attention given to the places of the *Logic* and of the *Phenomenology* (henceforth the *Phen.*), respectively in Hegel's systematic philosophy, the book can be read as a commentary on both. It is not in either case a section by section explanation of the text, and thus not a commentary in the standard sense. Still, it provides in both cases very extensive suggestions for how to read two of the most tantalizing and powerful texts in the Western philosophical tradition. In both cases the central clue is Hegel's claim in the Preface to the *Phen.* that "the truth is the whole." It may be that no recent student of Hegel has tried to take his holism as seriously as Puntel. The result is that his suggestions for reading both the *Logic* and the *Phen.* focus entirely on seeking to understand the role they play in the system whose unity is being sought.

Though it is perhaps a minor point, it should perhaps be mentioned at the outset that Puntel frequently notes the importance of categories from the *Logic of Essence*, such as whole and part, just mentioned, in Hegel's attempts to comment on the structure of the system from within it. He takes this to be something of a puzzle, since these categories are not presented by Hegel as being adequate to the highest kinds of unity, of which, presumably, the system itself should be an example. Though Puntel does not provide a clear solution to this puzzle, he does bring into focus one of the more important questions which will have to be answered in any complete portrayal of the unity of Hegel's systematic thought.

The question of this unity is often put in terms of the relation of the *Phen.* to either the *Logic* or the whole system as presented in the *Encyclopedia*, or in terms of the transition from *Logic* to *Philosophy of Nature* in the latter. Puntel has a great deal to say about both of these issues, but he does not take either as his point of departure. For him the question of unity in Hegel's mature thought is the question of its proper *Darstellung*, its adequate presentation. His central



thesis is that 1) there is no single manner of adequately giving expression to Hegel's systematic philosophy, and 2) the three syllogisms (*Schlüsse*) discussed at the end of the *Encyclopedia* (pars. 575-77) are not three different ways of looking at the *Encyclopedia's* presentation of the system, but three fully different modes of its *Darstellung*, only the first of which occurs in the *Encyclopedia*. The holistic unity of Hegel's system lies not in any single *Darstellung* of it, but in the unity of the three forms of expression which it requires. By taking this position, suggested at least in part by earlier writings of Lasson and Vander Meulen, Puntel stands in direct opposition to two of the most influential recent discussions of the unity of Hegel's system, those of O. Pöggeler and especially H. F. Fulda.<sup>1</sup>

The first of the four investigations which make up this book, originally a *Habilitationschrift* at Munich, is introductory. It provides a preliminary discussion of the three terms in the main title. The first of these is *Darstellung*, often translated into English as presentation. Puntel is explicit that by this term he does not mean a summary of the content, but rather the form in which that content is presented or given expression. His task at this point is to give initial plausibility to at least the possibility that the system permits or even requires multiple modes of presentation, and more specifically, that the *Encyclopedia* is but one of them. One way he seeks to do this is through a discussion of the "speculative proposition" as presented by Hegel in the Preface to the *Phen*. The normal subject-predicate form of judgment is not able, on Hegel's view, adequately to express speculative truth. But instead of drawing the conclusion that philosophical truth is attained in some mystical silence, Hegel insists that speculative truth must nevertheless find its expression in standard prose, made up of sentences with subjects and predicates. In other words, it must be mediated through a language form which is never wholly adequate to it. Built into this notion of mediation is the possibility that there will be a plurality of mediums through which it can and must occur.

Another way of putting essentially the same point is in terms of Hegel's standard distinction between intuition (*Anschauung*), representation (*Vorstellung*) and thought (*Denken*). While it is always the task of philosophy to move from intuition and representation to thought, it is not a matter of simple negation. The former are to be *aufgehoben* in the latter, which means they are preserved while being transcended. Thus, "what grasps conceptual thought (*begreifende Denken*) is nothing other than just the total process [of mediation], or in other words, the unity of intuition, representation, and thought" (p. 38). The running commentary and examples which are interspersed throughout the more austere "conceptual" elements of texts such as the *Logic* both belong and do not belong to philosophical science. They do not belong in so far as they are not able to express the unity of the three elements, but they do belong in so far as they are the medium through which the *Begriff* must be mediated.

Still a third way of suggesting the same conclusion comes directly from the

<sup>1</sup> The relevant works of Pöggeler are "Zur Deutung der Phänomenologie des Geistes," in, *Hegel-Studien* 1 (1961), 255-94, "Hegels Jenaer Systemkonzeption," in, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 71 (1963-64), 286-318, and "Die Komposition der Phänomenologie des Geistes," in, *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3 (1966), 27-74. Fulda discusses the unity of Hegel's system in *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt a/M: B. Klostermann, 1965), and "Zur Logik der Phänomenologie von 1807," in, *Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 3 (1966), 75-101.

discussion of the three syllogisms. The first is the one which obviously conforms most directly to the *Encyclopedia*, in which the movement is from Logic to Nature and Spirit. Hegel calls attention to the fact that this mediation of the philosophical concept has "the external form of *transition* (*Übergeben*)" (par. 575). This corresponds to the Logic of Being, which is capable of giving expression only to unities less developed and complete than can be expressed by the Logics of Essence and the Concept respectively, with their central notions of appearance (*Schein*) and development (*Entwicklung*). Thus even in terms of the Logic, which provides the method and structure of the encyclopedic *Darstellung*, that *Darstellung* by itself would seem to be systematically incomplete.

The correlative terms 'method' and 'structure' are the other concern of the first investigation. Though Hegel does not use the term 'Structur' he uses such terms as 'Bau' and 'Gerüst', which suggest it. (Puntel has a long footnote on the relation of his study to structuralism as a movement, p. 25.) The central question here is how the Logic can be method and structure of the whole system, especially if the *Phen.* is included as a part of the system, as Puntel insists it must be. Preliminary discussion of this point takes place as an extended discussion of the dual category Form-Content (N. B. — a category from the Logic of Essence) in terms of which it is possible to view the Logic as both identical with and different from the system as a whole. But a fuller discussion of this issue requires a more thorough investigation of the relation of the Logic to the other parts of the system (Nature and Spirit), which Hegel calls *Realphilosophie*. This becomes the theme of the second investigation.

Puntel here develops his opposition to a fairly standard reading of Hegel's Logic, exemplified with special force and clarity by Th. Litt, which he identifies as affirming the autarchy of the Logic.<sup>2</sup> According to this view the Logic can be and is developed wholly in reference to itself. Against this view Puntel claims that the Logic by itself is radically incomplete. He finds numerous indications of this. First of all, Hegel explicitly rejects the notion that the relation of the Logic to the realsystematic subject matter is that of application (*Anwendung*). This image makes form and content externally related to each other, each capable of being what it is without reference to the other. But if this model is to be rejected, Puntel argues, the Logic must be incomplete by itself.

Another indication is that on the autarchy hypothesis the transition from the Logic to the Philosophy of Nature becomes a *deus ex machina*. In truth one never needs, by some mysterious or magical leap, to break out of the Logic because one is never caught up in pure Logic to begin with. Hegel's comments about investigating the categories in and for themselves do not mean they can be understood in pure isolation, but rather that they must be understood in reference to the Absolute, the whole to which they belong; for in and for themselves that is just what they are, parts of a whole or moments of a development.

Still another indication against the autarchy thesis is the important role of examples and critical remarks throughout the Logic. These are not accidentally present, but indicate that the realphilosophical dimensions are constantly kept in view throughout the logical presentation. This is necessary because they belong essentially to the latter which, to repeat, remains incomplete without them. The Logic is the original expression of the whole in something like the sense in which

<sup>2</sup> Litt's thesis is developed in, Hegel: *Versuch einer kritischen Erneuerung* (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1953).

Abstract Right is the original expression of freedom in the *Philosophy of Right*. Every beginning is an immediacy which needs to be *aufgehoben* in a concrete totality. This is true not merely of the earliest categories of the Logic but of the Logic itself as a (sub)whole.

It is precisely in this context that Puntel includes his discussion of the ontological proof in Hegel's thought (pp. 112-16). Hegel's own claim for the inseparability of thought and being is seen by him to be adumbrated in the language of an earlier metaphysics by this most tantalizing of proofs for the existence of God. Reinterpreted by Hegel, the truth of the proof is not the existence of a particular being, but what might be called the real reference of reason and hence the incompleteness of the Logic even in its own totality. Given this perspective one must not only keep the realsystematic spheres constantly in view while reading the Logic, but can just as well start with the Philosophy of Nature or of Spirit and seek to see how the Logic is in a sense their abbreviation.

What then is the principle of construction for the Logic? It can be no purely inner-logical principle, for that would imply the autarchy of the Logic. It must in some way be the Absolute itself, but that only pushes us to the question of how the Absolute is to be understood. It turns out that Hegel himself articulates this in terms of the structures of subjective spirit, and this becomes the clue to Puntel's most important supporting thesis, the equal priority (*Gleichursprünglichkeit*) of Logic, Phenomenology, and Noology in Hegel's system.

It will be remembered that in the *Encyclopedia*, the major sub-divisions of Subjective Spirit are Anthropology, Phenomenology, and Psychology. The first of these drops out of Puntel's discussion at the start, for it is merely the transition from nature to spirit. It is the latter two which present spirit proper in its subjective mode (i.e., not yet objective or absolute). Phenomenology does this in terms of consciousness, while Psychology does it in terms of the concept of spirit itself. Because he wishes to avoid confusions arising from present-day connotations of the term 'psychology' and because he is prepared to argue that Hegel's claim here is not a form of psychologism, Puntel uses the term Noology in place of Psychology. So when he speaks of the equal priority of Logic, Phenomenology, and Noology (henceforth L, P, and N), he is referring to the Logic and the second and third divisions of the Philosophy of subjective Spirit.

L, P, and N in their equal priority are the construction principles of Hegel's system. This is the final expression of Puntel's understanding of the incompleteness and dependence of the Logic (vs. its autarchy) in relation to the realsystematic dimensions of the system. In the third investigation it will become the basis for further exploration of the possibility of the system's having multiple presentations. But first the second investigation concludes with the attempt to give the thesis an initial plausibility through discussion of several texts which Puntel calls the "great axial texts" because they seem to him the most direct support for his thesis of equal priority (pp. 136-38). Two of these texts are from the *Science of Logic's* introduction to the Logic of the Begriff, the third from the *Anmerkung* to Paragraph 467 of the *Ency*. The briefness of the discussion of these texts is due to two factors. They are not entirely unambiguous with reference to Puntel's thesis, and he does not think his interpretation can be established by citing proof texts. In both cases the whole interpretation of Hegel's system which emerges from this thesis is the support on which he wishes to be judged, and this includes the interpretation he gives to the axial texts as well.



This discussion, therefore, has something of the status of the Preface to the *Phen*. It is clear, however, that the major thesis of there being more than one *Darstellung* of the system together with the supporting thesis of the equal priority of L, P, and N will suggest and require a wholly new reading of the Logic.

The third investigation is entitled "The Elementary Structure of Hegel's Philosophy: Logic—Phenomenology—Noology." This embodies the claim that it is not the Logic by itself which is the point of departure, method, and structure of Hegel's system, but that there is a threefold point of departure, etc., and that only the three distinct moments in their unity and difference, which Puntel calls their unity of correspondence (*Entsprechungseinheit*), reveal the heart and thus the unity of the system. This obviously implies the possibility of a triple *Darstellung*, for if the *Ency*, is the presentation of the system from the standpoint of the Logic as method and structure, the entire system could also be presented with each of the other two aspects of the elementary structure as guide to the form of presentation. The unity and completeness of the system would only be present in the three presentations taken together. Thus not only is the Logic radically incomplete by itself, but the *Ency*. is as well. By itself it does not constitute an adequate expression of systematic philosophy.

First, P and N need to be seen in their identity and difference. Their identity consists in the fact that they describe the working of reason and have it as their result. The difference is that consciousness is the medium for P, while spirit as such is the medium for N. This means that reason's presence in the processes described is overt in the latter case, while only implicit in the former. For consciousness the duality of subject and object has the form of an opposition, whereas for spirit as such the otherness involved in the structure of consciousness has been recognized as one's own other and thus as no barrier to freedom. Otherness does not disappear, but it has a different meaning and results in a different self-understanding in Noology from what occurs in Phenomenology. Thus there can be P without N but not vice versa. That is their difference. But both describe the working of reason in the life of spirit, and that is their identity.

Next comes the question of the distinction of L from P and N. Like N, L differs from P in that the oppositional relation of subject and object has been overcome. But the difference of L from N is harder to state, especially since there is a suggested parallel between L, P, and N on the one hand and Being, Essence, and Begriff on the other. This suggests that L is in an important sense less mediated and more abstract than P, while the opposite is true of N. A similar suggestion emerges from the parallel suggested between L, P, and N respectively, and intuition, representation, and thought. Once again, in spite of the thesis of the equal priority of L, P, and N, it looks as if L is in an important sense prior to (and thus less complete than) P and N. Once again the finality of a *Darstellung* of the system based on the Logic is radically put into question.

In the final analysis, the claim that L, P, and N have an equal priority despite the differences which make it possible to see them as moving from abstract to concrete rests on the fact that the three contexts of mediation which they represent, (pure) thought, self-consciousness, and spirit are all determinations of the idea (pp. 218f). The claim that in their correspondence-unity they represent the elementary structure of Hegel's system is related to the observation that in each medium there is a common triplicity. It is not that of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but rather that of abstract immediacy, mediation, and concrete immedi-

acy. The first moment is that of self-sufficiency through isolation or incompleteness. The second is that of dependency on another through recognized incompleteness. The third is that of self-sufficiency through relatedness or totality. Whether the movement is from Being to Essence to Begriff or from Consciousness to Self-Consciousness to Reason or from Theoretical Spirit to Practical Spirit to Free Spirit (the major triads of L, P, and N, respectively), it is the same method or structure (method being the movement, structure the determinateness of the Begriff) which is at work, and this is the elementary or foundational structure for the whole system. It is the original and simplest case of dialectic, or better, it is the dialectic itself. Everything else is only specification.

The fourth and final investigation applies the previous argument to the perennial question of the relation of the *Phen.* to the system as expressed in the *Ency.* In view of what has gone before it is not surprising that Puntel holds the *Phen.* to be a *Darstellung* of the entire system. It differs from the encyclopedic *Darstellung* by having the P aspect of the elementary structure as its guiding principle while the *Ency.* has the L aspect as its. On the view that Puntel has been developing, the system has to be presented from three different perspectives, equally fundamental. The *Ency.* and the *Phen.* are two of those three. (Puntel mentions the suggestion made by Lasson that the Berlin lectures represent the third *Darstellung*, the one from the N perspective, but he never develops this idea in any detail. If this were to be supportable it would dramatically increase the importance of the lectures for grasping Hegel's thought. For there is an important sense in which, though the three moments of the elementary structure share a *Gleichursprünglichkeit*, it is the perspective of Noology which is the richest and most concrete. The concreteness of the lectures, which makes them so popular, would then turn out to be not the accidental result of their having the form of lectures, but would have a necessity grounded in the Hegelian concept of systematic philosophy itself.)

Pöggeler has shown the importance of the Jena Logic and Metaphysics for the development of the *Phen.* But this gives rise to a puzzle which, in Puntel's view, Pöggeler cannot solve. Rosenkranz cites a text according to which Hegel viewed the Jena Logic and Metaphysics as a purification of thought in which it is elevated to the level of philosophy. But almost immediately he writes a *Phen.* which seems to have that same task, and then once again writes a Logic which seems to have the same assignment as the Jena version. Can Hegel not make up his mind about how an entry into philosophy is to be made? Puntel's claim is that in relation to his central theses there is no problem at all. The notion of multiple presentations of the system contains within it the notion of multiple entries into the sphere of systematic philosophy. The only question is what the noological introduction to the system would be.

But, since the *Phen.* is a *Darstellung* of the whole system, it is not merely an elevation to the systematic standpoint or an introduction to philosophy. The content as well as the method and structure of the system is to be given. That makes it possible to make sense out of the break which has puzzled the commentators, not merely since Haering, but all the way back to Haym. The *Phen.* not only presents the elementary structure of the system in its phenomenological form, as the movement from Consciousness to Self-Consciousness to Reason. Having done this it goes on to develop the concrete life of spirit in the second half of the book, thereby becoming the phenomenological presentation of the

whole system in accordance with the scheme of the second syllogism of the *Ency.*, in which spirit is the middle term linking nature (natural consciousness) with the idea of Logical principle (Absolute Knowing).

It is at this point that the sustained polemic against Fulda begins. In view of the unity of the equally prior moments of the elementary structure, he is right to look for a correspondence between the movement of the Logic and that of the *Phen.*, and he is right in finding no satisfactory parallel in the form he expects. But his expectation is misguided. He looks for a continuous series of logical moments corresponding to the whole of the phenomenological journey, but this overlooks the fact that when one reaches Reason one is at the end, and the remainder is a retracing of essentially the same journey at a richer and more concrete level. Thus the parallel between the Logic and the *Phen.* is that between the whole of the former and each half of the latter rather than the whole of the latter.

Another consequence of Fulda's position is that the *Phen.* provides a justification and clarification of the system external to the system and that, since the second and third syllogisms of the *Ency.* describe the adequate concept of the system but not its encyclopedic *Darstellung*, the adequate concept of the system falls similarly outside the system's actual presentation. This viewpoint stands in close relation to that of Pöggeler, who holds the *Phen.* to be the mediation of history and truth, but one which occurs outside the system proper. In distinction to these views, Puntel holds that since the *Phen.* is part of the system as one of its necessary formulations, the justification, clarification, mediation, etc., which it provides belong to the system as essential parts of it rather than being some kind of accidental appendage.

The great strength of Puntel's interpretation of the unity of Hegel's system is that by taking Hegel's holism seriously and enlarging the scope of the whole, he makes it possible to hold together elements which have been stubbornly falling apart for Hegel scholarship for a long time. There are, however, two general difficulties with his project which need to be mentioned. The first is that there is so little solid evidence that Hegel understood himself in the manner suggested by Puntel. One is tempted to respond that there is more truth than evidence here, or to recall comments to the effect that the interpreter must understand the author better than he understood himself. Puntel himself seems aware of this, and while he points to indications that Hegel might himself be suggesting his kind of model, he insists that the question is a systematic one rather than an historical and biographical one. On this point he is surely right.

The other difficulty comes when we move from the question, "Has he got it right," to the question, "What difference does it make?" Why should anyone be concerned with whether the system has one *Darstellung* or three and whether the *Phen.* is internal or external to the system? Some may find this question too irreverent to entertain, but Puntel himself does not. In speaking of the unity of theory and practice achieved by Hegel's system, he refers to its enormous relevance (*ungeheure Relevanz*), but leaves the reader with the questions, "Relevance for what? and how?" No practice seems to emerge at all. It is especially interesting that Puntel mentions M. Theunissen in this connection, for he, in his writing about the method and structure of the Hegelian system, remains thoroughly at pains to seek out and to specify as carefully as possible what the



political and religious consequences of the argument are, and thus provides an interesting contrast.<sup>3</sup> If the discussion of the unity of Hegel's system is to be more than an esoteric debate among those narrowly devoted to scholarship for its own sake, Theunissen's concern for the question, "What difference does it all make?" will have to be given greater attention.

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<sup>3</sup> Puntel refers to Theunissen's *Die Verwirklichung der Vernunft: Zur Theorie-Praxis-Diskussion im Anschluss an Hegel*, Beiheft 6 of *Philosophische Rundschau* (Tübingen, 1970). At least equally important in this context are his *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), and *Sein und Schein: Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt a/M: Surhkamp, 1978).

MICHAEL THEUNISSEN, *SEIN UND SCHEIN*  
*DIE KRITISCHE FUNKTION DER HEGELSCHEN LOGIK*

Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978. 502 pp.

Joseph J. Kockelmans

Theunissen, who by now is widely known for his studies of German idealism, critical theory, social philosophy, and theology, gives us in this impressive work an original interpretation of the meaning of Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

The author begins with the manner in which Hegel understands his own work, taking this self-interpretation as a starting point for his critical investigations. According to Theunissen, Hegel's dialectical logic gives us a critical presentation (*Darstellung*) of the entire Western metaphysical tradition, including Kant's and Fichte's transcendental philosophies. Thus the author takes seriously Hegel's claim that, in the *Logic*, the entirety of European philosophy is to be overcome; yet, in his view, he evaluates the negative moment of the overcoming of metaphysics in a more decisive manner than we find it in Hegel's own self-understanding.

The book begins with the justification of the thesis concerning the unity of presentation and critique. It then gradually unfolds a detailed explanation of Hegel's *Logic* which focuses primarily on the manner in which, at each level of the development of thought described in the *Logic*, presentation is intertwined with critique, truth with semblance. This approach also gives us access to the content of the *Logic*; Theunissen uses the terms 'indifference' (*Gleichgültigkeit*) and 'domination' (*Herrschaft*) to determine the dual aspect of this content insofar as it is to be criticized, whereas he employs the expression 'communicative freedom' to characterize the criterion for this critique. By 'communicative freedom' he understands the requirement that one person does not experience another person as a limit, but rather as the condition of the possibility of his own self-realization. This criterion for the critique is really of a theological origin and, thus, lies beyond the limits of metaphysics proper. (pp. 25-26, 28-32, 45-46)

Throughout the book Theunissen tries to show the actual relevance of Hegel's *Logic* for our own socio-political world; but in his view this presupposes that Hegel's own method be applied to the *Logic* itself. *Sein und Schein*, too, following this presupposition, must give a critical presentation. This critical distance shows that there is a deep gap between intention and realization in Hegel's *Logic*. The distinction between presentation and critique makes it possible also

to articulate in an analytic manner the meaning of some concepts that remain ambiguous in Hegel's own explanation.

The work consists of five major parts, preceded by a Preface and an Introduction, and followed by a Prospect. In the Preface Theunissen writes that in 1972 he had set out to write a book on the influence of Hegel's logic of the determinations of reflection on the philosophy of Marx. Of this book, to be entitled *Widerspruch*, only the first chapter was then written. Some of the theses which at that time the author hoped to develop in the book were presented in Moscow in 1974 and then published in the *Hegel-Jahrbuch* of 1974. The difficulties encountered in the originally planned work led him to the investigations which constitute the content of the present book which, understandably, has the character of being a transitory study. (p. 9)

In the author's view, Hegel's *Logic* is the most complex work in the entire history of philosophy. Its complexity consists primarily in the fact that in it purely formal structures are intertwined with a certain content. Until now no one has completely succeeded in exhausting the wealth of its ideas, because authors have either focused exclusively on an elucidation of the purely formal structures unfolded in the book or have tried to apply these formal structures to an extralogical content in a rather arbitrary manner. Theunissen's book is an attempt to 'fill' the abstract and formal basis of the purely logical with the content of the truth (which is to include religion), and to find in this basis itself the power to disclose Hegel's view on the true meaning and reality of the world.

Yet the present book is not meant to present an exhaustive interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* as a whole, or to develop an adequate reconstruction of Hegel's entire logical theory; it merely presents some variations on a few basic motifs which, however fundamental they may be in themselves, may very well not always constitute the basic principles which explain the inner organization of Hegel's own theory. (pp. 9-10) As a matter of fact, Theunissen is not primarily concerned with making a contribution to an objective, philological interpretation of Hegel's own ideas here, but rather with an attempt to come to a better understanding of how Hegel's ideas have developed and 'worked' in our tradition. He explicitly states that in Hegel's thought he is interested only in those problems and issues which are indeed genuinely relevant for us today. (p. 10)

Within this general perspective two additional restrictions must be pointed out, according to the author, in order to prevent misunderstanding. The interpretation provided here limits itself to the problematic which is inherently implicit in the relationship between Being and Semblance (*Schein*). Secondly, Theunissen focuses predominantly on the *critical* function of Hegel's *Logic*, even though this work was intended by Hegel himself as a presentation of the truth, in addition to being a critique of semblance. (pp. 10-11)

Theunissen finally remarks that he hopes to shed light on Hegel's political theology from the perspective of the *Logic*, which constitutes the first part of Hegel's philosophical system, whereas in an earlier publication he had tried to do the same from the viewpoint of the doctrine of absolute Spirit, which constitutes the conclusion of Hegel's system. In the latter book, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), Theunissen developed the thesis that Hegel's philosophy of Spirit, with its emphasis on religion, contains the genuine clue for a proper understanding of his entire philosophy and, thus, that Hegel's entire philosophy



is to be reappraised in the light of his conception of religion. Hegel's doctrine, furthermore, contains an unfulfilled dimension which must be further developed. This dimension leaves room for a reorganization of man's socio-political life such that the alienation occasioned by his political existence can come to an end. It is in this sense that Hegel's doctrine of absolute Spirit can be presented as a theologico-political treatise. But let us return to *Sein und Schein*.

In the *Introduction*, in which Theunissen formulates his basic thesis, he first states that in the *Logic* Hegel was concerned primarily not with pointing to a system, but rather with *presenting a system in a justified and convincing manner*, and that such a presentation implies a critique of the entire philosophical tradition. What Hegel intended to present in this way was a philosophical system which was to replace the metaphysics correctly rejected by Kant's critique.

Guided by Marx's criticism of Hegel's *Logic*, Theunissen has come to the conclusion that Hegel's efforts confront us with three basic problems: (1) What does Hegel really understand by metaphysics? (2) To what degree can a treatise on metaphysics be at the same time a critique and a justified presentation of metaphysics? In other words, precisely what is it that is being criticized and what is it that is being presented? (3) What is one to think about Marx's criticism of Hegel's effort; or, formulated differently, how adequate is Hegel's critique of classical metaphysics?

Hegel's conception of metaphysics is very broad and encompasses our entire philosophical tradition; it focuses on formal logic (which Hegel considers to be the merely formal appendix of classical metaphysics), Kant's transcendental philosophy, the classical metaphysics that Kant subjected to a radical critique, and, finally, on the metaphysics that is implicit in our pre-philosophical conception of world, including that of the sciences. (pp. 13-19)

In *Part I* Theunissen explains that in the *Logic* the term 'metaphysics' is used in two opposing significations: there is a conception of metaphysics which Hegel criticizes and tries to overcome, and there is a conception of metaphysics which the *Logic* is to present. Each of the three basic parts of the *Logic* has in Hegel's own view its proper function in regard to metaphysics. Objective logic, which is concerned with Being and Essence, must take the place of the classical *metaphysica generalis* (= ontology); it criticizes ontology's representational form of thought. (pp. 23-25) The logic of Being is concerned with ontology insofar as it makes universal claims about Being as Being in itself; it implies a critique of objectifying thinking which represents the determinations of Being in a manner which is to be characterized by the relation of indifference. The logic of Essence, on the other hand, tries to unmask the metaphysical categories as the products of reflecting thought and explicitly stresses the relativity of these distinctions; however, it equally posits them as independent. Now the fact that the logic of Essence merely places independence and positedness next to one another and fails to reconcile their opposition into a unity (*Logik*, I, 140), leads to a contradiction to which the theory of independent determinations of reflection ultimately leads. Thus the critique which the logic of Essence exerts upon metaphysics must also focus on the mere juxtaposition of independence and positedness.

In addition to the independence which the logic of reflection attributes to the products of the mode of thinking that is examined in the logic of Being, Hegel distinguishes yet another kind of independence. These products are independent

also, "because they are each the reflection of the Whole in themselves, and they pertain to opposition only insofar as it is in each case determinateness which as the Whole is reflected in it." (II, 42). In the determinations of reflection the determinateness has fixed itself infinitely. "It is what is so determined which has *subjected to itself* its transition and its mere positedness and, thus, has converted its reflection-into-other into a reflection-into-itself." (II, 22) Thus the independence of the logic of reflection implies a *domination* which itself presupposes the independence (= indifference) in the sense of the logic of Being. (pp. 23-29)

Yet what Hegel's *Logic* criticizes is not only the fact that the interpretation of 'what-is' from the perspective of the relation of domination implies the acceptance of the relation of indifference; it also criticizes the dominating form of thought itself. In both the logic of Being and the logic of Essence Hegel uses as the norm of his critique the assumption that 'what-is' can be itself only as a relation to its own other. Thus the logic of Essence, insofar as it continues to make the relation dependent on one of the *relata*, does not yet attain the only true Being in which the relation itself is all that is. Hegel's normative ideal of the absolute Relation implies that the *relata* are of absolutely equal rank. (p. 30)

Objective logic is to take the place of classical metaphysics, that is, of both general ontology and of the three branches of special metaphysics which concern themselves with the soul, the world, and God, respectively. But in view of the fact that the absolute Spirit implies the subjective Spirit (= soul) and the objective Spirit (= world), the critique focuses mainly on natural theology. Thus objective logic aims its critique at the ontologization of natural theology, on its objectifying character, and its attempt to apply to God the determinations and relations of the finite. (I, 75) As for subjective logic, Hegel does not accord equal stress to its negative, critical function. He divides it into three parts which appear to be parallel to the three branches of special metaphysics, although it obviously does not deal with their subject matters in the manner of these three disciplines. (pp. 41-42)

According to Theunissen, in subjective logic theology really means the combination of natural and Christian theology. After objective logic has liberated natural theology from its objectifying form of thought, subjective logic can open up this theology for Christian theology as that which is the completely other of objectifying metaphysics. The close link between the logic of the Concept and Christian theology is not only clear from the peculiar language which Hegel uses here ('free power,' 'pure free love,' 'unbounded bliss'), but also from the basic conception of logic itself. For Hegel, the genuine truth is the true reality which is described in the New Testament in terms of freedom and love. Freedom for Hegel is "the truth of necessity and the relational mode of the Concept." Since the Concept itself is love, the freedom referred to must be a determinate one; it has the mode of communicative freedom. This has important implications for the conception of socio-political reality. Yet the *Logic* should obviously not be used for theoretical programs concerned with the social world and the realm of intersubjective concern. Hegel's *Logic* can, however, be characterized as a universal theory of communication which reaches far beyond those of other philosophers, including that of Buber, insofar as it literally comprises all things. (pp. 46-48)

The expression 'communicative freedom' is an interpretation of Hegel's position. To translate this notion into Hegel's own language one must indicate what

the *Logic* as a whole, and the logic of the Concept in particular, is capable of accomplishing in regard to this freedom, and how it is capable of this. The guiding clue in the search for the truth as far as the *Logic* as a whole is concerned is the idea of a complete unification of relation-to-self and relation-to-other in a relation which as Being-with-Self-in-other is freedom and as Being-in-Other-with-Self is love. Yet such freedom and love is prohibited by the indifference prefigured in the logic of Being and the domination prefigured in the logic of Essence. Thus the genuine unity of the relation-to-self and the relation-to-other is prefigured only in the logic of the Concept where both indifference and domination are actually overcome. (II, 489, 219, 235, 239; pp. 48-49)

The main task of the logic of Being and the logic of Essence is a *critical* presentation of metaphysics. The logic of the Concept does not present metaphysics critically and, thus, stands in a somewhat awkward relation to metaphysics. The root of this tension consists in the discord in theology itself. The logic of Being and Essence delivers natural theology from the objectifying manner of thinking, and the logic of the Concept appears as a branch of special metaphysics, i.e., as metaphysical theology which, however, articulating its own theory of absolute Spirit, incorporates Christian theology. (pp. 61-62)

In other words, the unity of the relation-to-self and the relation-to-other is possible for Hegel only on the basis of the Absolute, so that the universal theory of communication that is prefigured in it and theology are inseparable. In Theunissen's own view this is understandable in that the *Logic* presents the Whole only in the form of an intellectualist perspective (I, 31), and thus, "as a formal science, cannot and ought not to contain that reality, too, which is the content of . . . the science of Nature and Spirit." (II, 230; p. 60)

In the next section Theunissen indicates in what sense the object of the logic of the Concept is to be found in the presentation of the truth, which was merely sought for in the objective logic. The logic of the Concept presents truth since it is the presentation of *genuine* metaphysics; and it criticizes the lack of truth where it criticizes *classical* metaphysics. It presents the truth that is still hidden in metaphysics, the truth for which metaphysics itself has been searching without being able to reveal it. The objective logic also reveals truth, but this is merely a truth that can be immediately derived from metaphysics itself.

One is inclined to assume that if the object of the logic of the Concept is to be found in the presentation of the truth, the object of its critique must consist in untruth. Untruth for Hegel is either oneness of presentation and lack of logical development and articulation, or semblance (*Schein*). The opposite of the former is the Totality (*das Ganze*), the opposite of the latter is that which in truth is (*Phän., d. Geistes*, 21; p. 63).

Thus it is important to distinguish clearly the semblance which the objective logic already overcomes in its critique of traditional metaphysics from that which the logic of the Concept must yet transcend. Objective logic is still some kind of phenomenology: a logic of semblance which presents semblance as such by criticizing it. (pp. 72-80) Yet the *Logic* as a whole is not a phenomenology in that it is not the presentation of appearing knowledge or the experience of consciousness; yet it, too, is concerned with some form of knowledge and it itself is pure science, pure knowledge in which the knowledge considered and the considering knowledge totally coincide. Thus the presentation of the truth still hidden in metaphysics takes here the form of a self-presentation. (pp. 81-82)



According to Theunissen, Hegel never materialized this intention, in that the unity of critique and presentation, that is, the identity of negation and affirmation, essentially remains problematic. In his view this constitutes *the* problem of Hegel's *Logic*. In the elaboration of his intention Hegel time and again minimizes the difference in the unity he is discussing. An indication of this can be found in the fact that he does not always carefully distinguish between semblance due to lack of development and semblance as emptiness of content. (I, 56) It seems as if Hegel did not always fully realize the implications of his own efforts when he set out to present the history of Western thought as the genesis of the truth that his system as a whole was to present. Thus what is asked for is a critical presentation of Hegel's *Logic* which, as a critique of speculative logic, is to strengthen the critical dimension of Hegel's own efforts. (p. 90)

This hypothesis is now to be documented with the help of detailed textual analyses. To this end Theunissen turns in *Part II* to a thoughtful commentary on the first chapter of the logic of Being. (I, 66-95) In this part Theunissen criticizes Tugendhat's claim that Hegel works here with a 'completely phantastic conception of Being,' gives an explanation of the relationship between Being and intuition (*Anschauung*), discusses the relationship between the end of the *Phenomenology of Mind* and the beginning of the *Logic*, and explains the relationship between truth and semblance in this part of the *Logic*.

In an essay "Das Sein und das Nichts" Tugendhat criticizes the conceptions of Being proposed by both Parmenides and Hegel. In Theunissen's view this criticism may be correct as far as Parmenides' conception is concerned, but it certainly does not really affect Hegel's position. For Tugendhat criticizes Hegel for defending a thesis which he precisely tries to refute. At first sight, Tugendhat's critique is indeed plausible insofar as Hegel explicitly refers to Parmenides — his own first determination of Being is similar to that of Parmenides, and Hegel relates Being and Nothing to intuition (*Anschauung*). What Tugendhat did not realize is that Hegel himself portrays Parmenides' Being as something objectified, as something that is made into an empty content of intuition and, thus, as something to be unmasked as semblance. Furthermore, at this stage of its development the *Logic* is both the critique of metaphysics and the presentation of the truth. Theunissen justifies these claims with an explicit reference to Hegel's statements about Being and, time and again, shows that Tugendhat did not realize the distinction between the thinking that is being reflected upon and the critical thinking that occurs in the *Logic* itself.

Theunissen concludes this part with a brief reflection on the conflicting interpretations concerning whether or not the idea of transition is already to be applied to the beginning of the *Logic* itself (Gadamer versus R. E. Schulz), and with the dispute over the question of whether the beginning of the *Logic* constitutes a special case or whether it just follows the same dialectical laws that govern the rest of the work (Gadamer and Henrich versus R. E. Schulz and Wieland). (pp. 95-131)

In *Part III* Theunissen first states that the critical presentation of classical metaphysics in Hegel's objective logic assumes a new character with the transition from Being to determinate Being (*Dasein*). The unity of presentation and critique here has as its intentional correlate the unity of truth and semblance. Yet the truth which the logic of determinate Being tries to present is still not the entire truth, although it is now a truth that is already more determined than it

was in the first chapter of the *Logic*. The semblance is here no longer only semblance of other; in some sense it is another kind of semblance which is to be determined in a different way. This explains that with the transition to determinate Being a genuine unity of semblance and truth begins to manifest itself for the first time. In the first chapter of the *Logic* the presentation of the truth was only operative in a negative way, and truth did not yet appropriate the seeming determinations of thought. Here in the second chapter of the logic of Being we find both truth and semblance, immanent in the very same categories, which implies a transition of relations of indifference to relations of dominance.

A first issue to be discussed is the question of what Hegel understands by 'truth' in the logic of determinate Being. In the first section of *Part III* this is done through a description of the external aspect of the truth with reference to classical metaphysics in general and to the philosophy of Plato in particular. In this section Theunissen focuses on the unity of semblance and truth from the perspective of semblance, whereas the second section concentrates on the same relationship from the perspective of what Hegel calls 'truth,' and thus from a perspective that is intrinsic in the *Logic* as such. This is the reason why the law of the movement of thought as found in the logic of determinate Being is to be clarified here first. This law takes its point of departure in semblance and must, at the same time, explain that this semblance is not yet fully overcome at the end of this particular chapter of the *Logic*. Hence this law will show no more than a minimization of semblance.

In the second chapter of the *Logic* semblance is operative under the guise of 'positivity,' a term which Hegel himself does not use in this chapter. 'Positivity' implies the *affirmative* character of determinate Being as well as the fact that thought at first takes this to be *pregiven*. Both of these connotations are implicit in what Hegel calls 'being posited in a concept.' (I, 96-97; pp. 135-46) It is the semblance of positivity taken in its dual meaning that is found in different ways in the three parts of the logic of determinate Being. And it is in the resolution of this semblance of positivity that the logic of determinate Being reveals truth. By making the double negativity (corresponding to the double positivity assumed in the logic of determinate Being) explicit, Hegel makes the truth concerning the logic of Being come to the fore. In its truth determinate Being is negativity. (pp. 146-50)

Theunissen points out here that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel makes a distinction between the truth *concerning*... and *the* truth, suggesting that the *Phenomenology* is concerned with the former and the *Logic* with the latter. However, in all cases where thought shows truth by resolving semblance, it can only show a truth concerning... But if this is indeed so, is the *Logic* then in this regard still not a kind of phenomenology? (pp. 151-53) If Hegel is consistent he must also point out in each part of the *Logic* what the dialectic which shows a truth concerning... reveals in regard to *the* truth. How this is to be done is not clear at this stage of the process, since we do not yet have a full understanding of the negativity involved. This is the reason why Theunissen next turns to a careful analysis of Hegel's conception of the dynamics of the Negative in the logic of Finitude, as well as of the experiential content of the concept of Negation. With respect to the latter, he pays special attention to the difference between simple and double negation, and to the precise meaning of negation, the Negative, negativity, self-related relation, absolute relation, absolute distinction, etc. (pp. 154-76)

Theunissen then points out that prior to the logic of determinate Being, Becoming was already shown to be the truth concerning Being and Nothing and that it is their truth as Transition. Now Transition is also the truth concerning determinate Being; yet since this truth is merely a first negation, it will again sink back into being merely the truth concerning determinate Being. Theunissen concludes this part with reflections on the importance of the concept of Transition for the logic of Essence and the logic of the Concept. He also shows that in Hegel's reflections there is a conception of negativity at work which is not completely justifiable, although it has some plausibility within Hegel's own dialectic. He furthermore explains that Hegel applies this notion beyond its possible limits and that it rests on assumptions that make Hegel's *Logic* 'unfit' for Christian theology and for philosophical anthropology, even though it contains elements that can be used constructively. (pp. 176-83)

Part IV turns to the detailed analysis of Hegel's reflections on determinate Being. This part consists of two major sections, the first of which is concerned with an analysis of Hegel's move from determinate Being as such, via Quality, to Something; the second section follows Hegel's move from determinate Being as such via Finitude to Infinitude. Here we see the ambiguity of the part which the concept of Becoming plays in the *Science of Logic* and the way in which it places the work, time and again, in a dual perspective. He concludes from this that one must assume that Hegel either intended a critical moment to be an inherent aspect of the *Logic*, or that we must severely criticize the work itself. In the author's opinion, Hegel can avoid this criticism only under the condition that one make a distinction between external reflection and critical presentation: a reflection which describes what merely for us is the case, and a critical presentation which states what truly is the case. (p. 189) Thus when Hegel, for instance, states that determinate Being appears as something primary and as something from which a beginning is being made (I, 96), and then posits that the truth concerning determinate Being is that it is not primary (II, 30), one must conclude that, for him, the first determination of determinate Being is still affected by semblance (pp. 189-97). The seeming primacy with which determinate Being presents itself points to a form of semblance that is closely connected with determinate Being's givenness. This realization leads Theunissen to some important reflections on immediacy and origin, as well as on the tension which repeatedly manifests itself in the *Logic* between that which is first in the thought process described in the *Logic* and that which is genuinely *prius* for thought, a tension which ultimately results from the unity of identity and difference found in each chapter of the work.

Theunissen then substantiates his thesis that at each stage of the development of thought the *Logic* takes its point of departure from semblance, with reflections on Hegel's conception of Reality, the Finite, and the Infinite. According to the author, Hegel's struggle to reveal both semblance and truth at the same time encounters serious difficulties here, which Hegel was never able to overcome completely. Theunissen promises to return to this claim. (pp. 187-297)

In the first four parts of his book Theunissen is concerned with an interpretation of the logic of Quality which is the first part of the logic of Being. In Part V, he finally turns to the logic of Essence and the logic of the Concept. Concerning the logic of Essence, he limits himself to a critical reflection on some important issues raised in the first chapter of this part of the *Logic* (*der Schein*).



Theunissen's basic aim in these reflections is to show how in the logic of Essence Hegel tries to achieve a resolution of the semblance of immediacy which is intrinsic in the pre-giveness with which determinate Being announces itself. (pp. 301-82)

Yet, according to Hegel's own view the sphere of Essence is still an incomplete connection of immediacy and mediation (*Ency.*, sect. 114). Thus the logic of Essence, too, partly fails in that it does not yet really come to grips with immediacy. The complete connection between the two is therefore to be presented in the logic of the Concept. Essence is merely the first negation of Being, and has thus turned it into semblance. The Concept is the second, the negation of negation; it is reconstructed Being and it is this as its infinite mediation. (II, 235)

Since now the form of Being as such is immediacy (*Ency.*, sect. 84), its reestablishment must consist in a complete reconstruction of its immediacy. Thus the logic of the Concept will free pure Being from the abstraction from which Being originally issues. The Concept will be shown to be the truth of pure Being. Pure Being from the very beginning was already in some sense in truth Concept, but merely Concept in itself. The moment pure Being comes to the fore as Concept in and for itself, the truth of pure Being becomes manifest. In the second section of *Part V* Theunissen shows how Hegel tries to account for this basic claim in the chapter on the Judgment by focusing on two basic theses: (1) By reformulating the undetermined immediacy of pure Being, the logic of the Concept can indeed rescue the originality which was alluded to earlier. (2) By returning to the truth moment in the immediacy of pure Being and the horizon that it opens up, the logic of the Concept is capable of disclosing the immediacy of determinate Being. The immediacy which is inherently affected by pre-giveness will as such not recur; it will be replaced by an immediacy that is structured in a different way and to a large extent will remain anonymous. (pp. 393-94)

Here Theunissen presents some very important reflections on Hegel's conception of the Judgment, its basic elements (predicate and subject), the meaning and function of the copula and its relation to pure Being, the various forms of judgment which Hegel, following Kant, distinguishes, the relationship between the logic of the Judgment and the logic of Reflection, and finally the implications of all of this for Hegel's conception of truth. In so doing, he repeatedly engages in a dialogue with some of the leading contemporary Hegel scholars who have addressed themselves to issues pertinent to the logic of the Judgment.

In this last part of the book Theunissen returns to a promise which he made first in the introduction (pp. 13-14) and later also in *Part I* (pp. 54ff). In the *Introduction* he writes that his investigations attempt to show (among other things) that Hegel's *Logic* finds the philosophical truth already prepared in the dialectical movement of the speculative proposition (*Satz*). Thus Hegel correctly requires of philosophy that it present the dialectical movement of the proposition (*Phän.*, 53). According to the *Phenomenology* philosophy must present the whole (*das Ganze*), in view of the fact that the speculative proposition precisely implies the whole system. In the presentation of the system it is of the greatest importance not to conceive of what is true (*das Wahre*) in terms of substance alone; it must be conceived rather in terms of both substance and subject. Furthermore, the presentation must *conceive and express* the subject-character of the substance, and not just try to justify it (pp. 13-14). As we have seen, Theunissen later returns to this where he explains in what sense the expression

'communicative freedom' can be taken to refer to a legitimate interpretation of the last part of Hegel's *Logic*. In his opinion, the guiding clue in the search for truth, as far as the *Logic* as a whole is concerned, is the idea of a complete unification of relation-to-self and relation-to-other, of freedom and love. (pp. 54-56) These ideas are developed in the last section of the book in great detail and with reference to Hegel's own texts. Theunissen also explains in this section that for Hegel there is a close connection between the logical and language; yet the author feels that Hegel's own conception of language was partly inadequate to deal with all the problems which are relevant here. In this context Theunissen critically discusses the work of Josef Simon. (pp. 470-71)

Theunissen finally concludes that it is obviously impossible to interpret the logic of the Concept as a whole as a universal communication theory or as a theory of intersubjectivity. Yet in his view this part of the *Logic*, too, must lay bare a structure which has its proper reality only in the relations between human beings. His interpretation of the logic of the Judgment, which focuses on the concept of communicative freedom (a concept which Hegel himself does not employ), tries to show that the members of the relation expressed in the judgment, namely subject and predicate, go together and become identical to one another in the judgment because of their going-together-into that which relates them (the copula). The latter transforms the objective universality of the species (by whose realization they sublimate their individualization which is still found in the totality), and the subjective reality of this universality which is absorbed in their corresponding to one another, into an identity without distinction. Such a concept of communicative freedom is formed and maintains itself in our speaking and acting together. (p. 472)

In the *Prospect*, Theunissen admits that his interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* was not primarily guided by faithfulness to the historical Hegel. In some instances he had to oppose the text in order to be able to hold on to what, in Hegel's dialectic, seems time and again to disappear immediately after it has been hinted at. If there is truth in this effort it shows that there is a conflict between the *Science of Logic* and the social theory of the *Philosophy of Right*. The gap between these two works runs parallel to the gap between Hegel's doctrine of absolute Spirit and his conception of right, to which Theunissen devoted an earlier work. The gap can be explained in part by the fact that the tension between the philosophy of right and the logical idea of communicative freedom follows from the fact that in Hegel's own view the Idea must necessarily be reconciled with 'the facts of the world'; and this cannot be done without compromise, if one is to avoid reason's turning over into an irrational force. Yet Hegel exaggerated the point, and the relationship between the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Right* is for us no longer an acceptable one. These considerations finally lead Theunissen to some reflections on Marx's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy. In his view, Marx was one of the very first who correctly understood Hegel's deepest intention and perhaps the only one who fully understood the implications of Hegel's *Logic* for his conception of right. Theunissen then points out that Marx's criticism of Hegel is carried out through assumptions and principles which Hegel himself also admitted. One could say, perhaps, that Marx criticizes Hegel's philosophy of right by employing the *Logic* in a more consistent manner than Hegel himself. The author refrains here from discussing Marx's own ideas. Yet he concludes that one may legitimately doubt whether Marx was more successful

than Hegel in anticipating in theory what must become experienceable as living reality through practical liberation from alienating domination. (pp. 476-86)

In my opinion *Sein and Schein* is an important book, for its greater part presents the reader with a penetrating and thoughtful commentary on several chapters of Hegel's *Logic*. The author shows great familiarity with the secondary literature and a very fine critical sense which manifests itself in the manner in which he treats the vast body of modern Hegel scholarship. In addition, he is able concretely to relate Hegel's ideas to the leading ideas of our entire Western tradition.

I agree with the two basic theses concretely developed in the book, namely that the movement of thought that the *Logic* portrays constantly and at each stage of its development is marked by a basic tension between what seems to show itself and what is, between Semblance and Being; and that if that which the *Logic* tries to reveal is to be relevant for that with which the rest of Hegel's philosophical system concerns itself, it must somehow prefigure the basic problematic treated in Hegel's philosophy of right. Yet I can fully understand Theunissen's own concern that many Hegel scholars will question some of his assumptions. It seems to me that one cannot do full justice to Hegel's *Logic* by reading it predominantly from the perspective of its possible relevance for our socio-political reality; and this is particularly so if this relevance itself is onesidedly understood from Marx's perspective.



Wolfgang Cramer, *Die Monade*  
Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1954.

Marius Schneider, OFM.

Ideas discussed and proposed in this book could be rightly described as representing a contemporary and original defense of the philosophy and metaphysics of man of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The human individual is seen as a person, a psycho-somatic unity, enlivened by a self that is essentially of a different, higher order of reality than its organism, yet inseparably united with it to constitute a necessarily bodily self. Man has the ultimate ground of his being in the creative act of the absolute Being, God. In spite of his essentially incarnated mode of existence, he is entitled to a faith and hope in immortality that cannot be in vain.

As the title of his book indicates, however, Cramer does not intend to express his basically traditional conceptions of human nature in the corresponding customary terminology. His attempt at establishing the traditional philosophical view of man by a new approach does not allow him to speak of human reality in terms of rational supposit, substantial unity, or essence. He identifies man with a specific kind of monad or experience and determines subjectivity as the central problem of philosophy. Because of the assumed self-evidence of its nature, this reality has scarcely ever been considered as an object worthy of philosophical examination. Only Leibniz is found to have offered profound insights into its constitution. Even this great genius of rationalist philosophy, however, has not thought his ideas about subjectivity through to their ultimate foundations and consequences. His conceptions of the monad are to serve as the point of departure of a new, thorough analysis of subjectivity, an analysis consistently neglected, yet absolutely required in a philosophy that regards a search into the grounds and reasons of apparent self-evidence as the proper object of its study. This analysis will reveal the monad subject as a real being in the world presupposed by the existential-analytic phenomenon "being-in-the-world" described in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. It will, moreover, be a kind of existential analysis itself, even if the monad's being is seen and analyzed in a way different from the being of *Dasein* in *Being and Time*. Subjectivity is not presented in the extreme degree of abstraction of Heidegger's being-in-the-world, nor is the end of its analysis sought in the determination of its characteristics, the so-called *existentials*; its being is conceived more concretely and traditionally as experiencing, perceiving, thinking, or willing, and, in conformity with the principle of sufficient reason and the understanding of substance as a capability of action in Leibniz' philosophy, its ground or reasons are sought in its "condition of possibility," its "origin," "principle," or "determination," so that the monad is found to be experience, perception, or consciousness. In such an

actualistic ontology of the subject, categories of Aristotelian metaphysics are obviously out of place. Monadology is a philosophical study of subjectivity, not of being as such.

The introduction to the ontology and metaphysics of subjectivity is sought in a "critique of the fundamental concepts of Kant's philosophy" (p. 50) in the first part of the book, entitled "Intuition and Thinking in the Critique of Pure Reason" (pp. 7ff). It will reveal that Kant does not face the problem of subjectivity, and that without a philosophical theory of the subject, the notions of givenness, intuition, and thinking cannot be well founded.

The need for a thorough analysis of the subject is first explained in a discussion of Kant's teaching about "affection and intuition" (pp. 7ff). In spite of the ambiguity of certain of Kant's texts, which seem to determine the object affecting our mind as the phenomenon, Kant is said generally to maintain that the receptivity of intuition is a result of an affection of the mind by the thing-in-itself. This Kantian notion of the indeterminable and unknowable thing-in-itself, however, renders an understanding of intuition as the reception of the given impossible; it does not allow us to explain how the positively determined reality of the mind could possibly be affected by this completely unknowable being, nor why some of the manifestations of this unknown ground should be represented as external and others as internal phenomena, why they should be experienced as different at all, or why as given and received. In short:

The problem of givenness remains unsolved in Kant's philosophy. The concept of the thing-in-itself and, accordingly, that of "affection" demand a positive determination . . . The only way (for a realistic solution) consists in facing the problem of the subjectivity of the subject . . . in a thorough analysis of the being called "subjective" (p. 11).

A similar conclusion is reached at the end of a critical examination of the first two space-arguments of Kant's transcendental aesthetic. Questions to be raised in relation to these arguments are essentially related to the problem of subjectivity. However subjectively space and time may be conceived, subjectivity itself is not subjective, but presupposed by everything that is determined subjectively. An understanding of pure forms of intuition "would thus demand an inquiry into the principle of subjectivity, which Kant did not perform" (p. 13).

The noumenal character of subjectivity and how it is different from what is presented as determined by subjective forms of the mind is also stressed in other remarks on Kant's ideas about time. Kant's insufficient attention to this difference is partly occasioned by his terminology, which frequently uses 'representation' in the sense of the represented object. When time is defined as a form of intuition, it is meant as a form of that which is perceived or represented. The perceived object, however, is not identical with the act of perceiving, which itself is a mode of temporality different from time as the form of internal intuition. Phenomena appear to, or are *for*, a being that itself cannot be a phenomenon. "Kant, accordingly, presupposes a positive determination (not only a thing-in-itself), which is not phenomenal. He does not examine this determination. He presupposes it as 'self-evident'" (p. 24). Obviously, this determination cannot be something completely unknown to us. When Kant declares time as the form of the intuitions of the self and of our internal states, this experiencing of internal states cannot be considered as a phenomenal state. Nor can the

internal condition, which is supposed to affect the internal sense and thus lead to its intuition, allow only an awareness of the existence of the perceiving subject, as Kant maintains; a differentiation between internal and external sensations and an awareness of an internal phenomenon as one's own state demand a knowledge of this state, and thus a knowledge of myself as I am, the possibility of which is denied by Kant. His conception of time as a form of the internal sense does not only lead to his disregard of the original temporality of subjectivity; by declaring time "the mediate condition of all external phenomena," he also overlooks the being-in-time proper of the external reality (p. 30). Spatial being is not merely temporal, because, as a state of the internal sense, its perception is subject to the form of intuition of time; the intended analysis of subjectivity will, on the contrary, reveal the existence of a temporal-spatial world as an essential condition of its possibility.

The discussion of the last sections of this first part of the book are intended to show that Kant's "concept of the understanding remains, in the last analysis, as undefined as that of the intuition" (p. 34). How is consciousness of an object possible? This is the question Kant is supposed to answer. The question is preceded by the "self-evidence" that representations are referred to objects. The answer would thus have to offer the ground of this self-evidence of object-consciousness. Kant's solution does not accomplish this task. The necessary relation of the manifold of intuition to the identical "I think" yields merely a unity of consciousness, not the unity of the object known. "The unity of consciousness is not the foundation . . . of the consciousness of unity" (p. 47).

The author concludes in the first part of his treatise that there is a way to lead from the unity of consciousness to the consciousness of the unity of the object. This is by the identification of I-consciousness with Is-consciousness as required by a reflection on the self-awareness of the self. It is a way demanding a conception of understanding as a cognitive mastery of being itself, which is inaccessible in Kant's philosophy.

The philosophical problem of subjectivity is to find its solution in the rest of the book. The constitution of this uniquely important reality is the object of serious thought in part 2: "The Monad and the World" (pp. 50f).

The "kind of species," the "principle" of experience, which is the basic and general form of subjectivity, is to be determined. "We ourselves are experience" (p. 52): we are aware that consciousness is a transcendent being, existing independently of being an object of consciousness, and that it is a specific type of being. Experience is temporal; it is not something spatial. If it were spatial like a thing of nature, the difference between the manifold of experience and the identity of the natural object would disappear; knowledge, which is essentially dependent upon the tension between the cognitive process of identification and the identity of being, would be impossible. The temporality of experience is not spatial. Nor is experience temporal in a manner that would relate it to other phases of experience; for "experience is not a phase in a series of phases"; it can, accordingly, be temporally determined only by the fact "that it is standing in relation to itself" (p. 56). Its relationship to somatic processes does not determine experience; for the concept of experience as a relation to itself is presupposed when its relation to the body is to be discussed. "Who considers experience as a correlate of bodily processes, uses senseless words." To "arrive" at a knowledge of subjectivity, beginning from the outside, as attempted by "the



absurdity of materialism – is absolutely impossible” (p. 57). Experience is not an event in space; as non-spatial, it cannot direct itself to “something already there” nor can such a real object enter into consciousness. Experience is relation to itself; the monad has no windows.

This fundamental reflexivity constituting the structure of experience should not be confused with the more restricted kind of reflection ascribed to cognitive acts intending phenomena of consciousness as their specific object. To be related to itself is essential to consciousness, since the experience of any object as standing-against or as different “has already necessarily related itself in what-is-experienced to itself” (p. 59).

As experienced, this “something” of experience is as such essentially immanent to subjectivity. Since nothing can enter or leave the monad, whatever it may have as an object of experience is what it is only as something actualized, as “originated from the origin,” which is the monad (p. 62); it is only as product of “producing,” as the author, following his teacher R. Hönigswald, prefers to call the intentional object and actual subjectivity (p. 61). It is not just a fact that the monad is without windows; it simply cannot have them (p. 62).

The subject, however, is not condemned to a condition of subjective idealism. In this improved edition of Leibniz’ monadology, it has access to reality without being forced to use the bridge of a preestablished harmony. This great philosopher was certainly right when he insisted that out of its own ground the monad develops its “perceptions.” The monad is without windows in the sense that experience as a whole, including its object, is essentially of the order of subjectivity. However, Leibniz did not dig into the deepest ground of the monad’s being, and thus did not discover the ultimate foundation of the principle of “production” (pp. 63ff).

Experience is essentially different from the bodily – it is not identical with the physical or physiological. Its obvious dependence upon the somatic, however, cannot be overlooked. An interpretation of the subject can make use of this dependence and reveal a structure of the monad that will allow us to define objective knowledge of the world still as a development of the ground of the monad.

Experience is a type of reality of its own – it is essentially “isolated,” windowless. This isolation of experience, however, necessarily involves a relation of experience to an “other.” As producing, experience is obviously individualized isolation. As a principle of experience, said to be identical with actual experience (p. 64), it is an individualized principle, a *case of* such a principle. This individuality of experience demands a determination by another principle, which renders such singularized cases of experience possible – “the order of possible multiplication” (p. 66). This principle of individuation is a “condition of the possibility of experience and of a different mode of being than experience” (p. 67). In other words: a mental or spiritual reality is not individualized by the mere fact that it is actualized; in spite of the fact that it is constantly described as essentially different from the spatial (material), it can be realized only as determined by a principle of individuation, which is the order of extended or external being. “The principle of individuation is the world,” which is “not a totality of phenomena, things, objects, individuals, but a principle, the principle of possible individuation . . . Experience is dependent upon the world” (p. 67). Subjectivity has the order of reality “world” as a condition of its possibility,

"not just in the sense that consciousness has to experience something like world," but as its principle of individuation. There is no need of a proof for the existence of God to overcome the doubt concerning the reality of the outside world, as Descartes had believed; a consideration of the mode of being of the "thinking substance" is sufficient to be certain of an order of existence different from subjectivity, namely the world (p. 67). The hypothesis of a preestablished harmony becomes superfluous.

The outside reality, which guarantees the individuality of subjectivity, is not the world as such, but an "external system, *pertaining* to and proper to" the individual case of subjectivity, the organism. Because of its dependence upon the organism, subjectivity is singularized. "The inseparable whole of subjectivity and organism is called individual." "Whoever experiences, is a bodily experiencing subject." The problem, how experience as a "relation to itself" can be an experience of an "other," finds its solution. Subjectivity is essentially relation to itself in its essential unification to its organism; "experience is production of objectivity's isolation as related to its inseparability from the organism" (pp. 69f). It is not and cannot be experience of the organism as part of the outside world, but experience of its own being as individualized because of the organism "inseparably" united to it (p. 71). As such, experience is "producing" in relation to the external *Dasein* of the individual, that is, actualizing *Dasein* as production, it experiences itself. As the lowest degree of subjectivity, "sensing-onself" could be assigned.

The dependence of subjectivity upon the world as principle of individuation is to be further developed in a discussion of the philosophical question of time. The necessary relationship of experience to the external reality is to be manifested as a postulate of its essentially temporal structure. The starting point of the discussion is seen in the discovery that time cannot be defined. This strange characteristic of time is found to be a result of its being something "original"; "we know originally and out of ourselves about time and the temporal. . . . We are an original understanding of time, inasmuch as . . . we are an understanding of our self." The question about time becomes the question about the self. The self that is self-understanding is original time-understanding, because "the self is original temporality," that is, that "original temporal reality" which makes understanding as such possible (pp. 77f).

As self-understanding, however, a self is at the same time world-understanding. It knows the world as one and as real, existing independently of and without any necessary relation to a self — as "world without self." The self understands its self only when grasping "that a self can exist only as bodily self in the world, while the world does not stand in need of any self" (p. 78). The original self-understanding thus implies also understanding a mode of temporality which, unlike itself, is spatial reality. The reason for this evident knowledge has to be sought in the being of the self as such; an analysis of the temporal mode of the self "has to show that this mode of time is possible only on the condition of the existence of another mode of temporality" representing "an ontological condition of the possibility of the self" (p. 79).

This view of the monad and the world obviously differs from corresponding ideas developed in contemporary philosophy. N. Hartmann's attempt at explaining phenomena by discovering a correlated ontology cannot be regarded as a genuine task of philosophical efforts. A phenomenon is somebody's phenome-

non; as such, it presupposes a "determination" that itself is not phenomenon, that is, the determination of the self. "The concept of the phenomenon demands an analysis of the structure of the self and thus of the conditions of the possibility of the self . . ." (p. 79).

A similar objection has to be raised also with regard to Husserl's theory of constitution of the world. "The world-phenomenon implies just the opposite: the world is not (only) phenomenon." The self-evident understanding of the world associated with the understanding of the self is consciousness of "the world without the self." Phenomenology, a philosophy of intentionality, fails to meet the problem of time.

Nor does Heidegger's existential analysis face the philosophical challenge of the self-evident understanding of the world. His "fundamental ontology is phenomenology and shares its shortcomings." Its being-in-the-world is a unified phenomenon, indivisible into component parts; its 'world' is merely a moment of this existential structure; it is *Dasein's* "disclosed" world, not "the world without the self" of the genuine phenomenon world. The phenomenon being-in-the-world is taken as an ultimate structure. As is customary in phenomenology, the possibility of the phenomenon is not analyzed. "Heidegger's existential analytic is hermeneutics, but not analysis" (pp. 80f).

The realistic analysis of subjectivity is to reveal the dependence of the subject upon the external temporal. The self is the temporality of relating to itself. It is a source of time, a taking of time in keeping hold of what is experienced and in anticipating its future. This characteristic relation to the future as a moment of the subject's temporality seems especially to lead to an insight into the monad's necessary association with external reality. In order to anticipate its future, "to be ahead of itself, a self must be a self-confidence . . . a trust in itself, to remain what it is" (p. 89). This remaining itself "is not a remaining out of itself." "Self-confidence is . . . the knowledge that its preservation does not have its foundation in the self"; the self would otherwise be "beyond all plurality and unique," completely resting in itself, not "running away from and hunting after itself," as does our self (p. 90). The condition of the possibility of the preservation of the self is thus to be sought outside the self: "the temporality which a self is, can preserve itself and exist only . . . when related to something which is not this structure or one of its moments." This other has to be a temporal determination, "since a self is essentially temporal and preservation is a temporal characteristic." This temporal reality, guaranteeing that a self can remain a self in its specific continuity of producing, is itself not a self-like temporal determination. It is rather an external temporal continuation, persisting in the temporal succession of before and after. The temporality of the relation to itself is "dependent upon an external temporal reality, to which it pertains and which pertains to it . . . In order to be able to be a producing self, an understanding self, a self must also be a bodily self." Its organism is "an external system, guaranteeing experience"; it is means and end of the self's care in the fulfillment of its elementary existential task of preserving itself (pp. 90ff).

The ego, or ego-consciousness or, simply, consciousness represents a specific mode of the monad or experience; the capability of the monad to interpret or develop itself is realized in a specific degree of potentiality. The ego is the relation to itself as an interpreting of itself as a mode of being, and thus as differentiating itself from the mode of being of the external. Ego or conscious-



ness is thus not only the experience of an individual, but also consciousness of being the consciousness of an individual or of being a person. As such, it is also consciousness of the world in which the person is an individual; consciousness is consciousness of being. This consciousness of the world, however, should not be misunderstood as a direction to transcendent being; an object as produced is not a being in "the world without the self." The production of the object, however, implies the awareness that things of the order of non-self-like-objects are not dependent upon it; it is consciousness of not-constituted, not-synthesized unity, and in the so-called production of transcendence the object of consciousness is known *as* something transcending consciousness. "Consciousness thus is aware of the transcendence of the world" (p. 98). "As consciousness, the ego is awareness of itself; it is not an identical substratum or an identical pole; it is not identical. But it is an actualizing of its identity" (p. 98). And it is awareness of itself as *one* consciousness, as being a case of consciousness. In the awareness of the individuality of itself and of its thinking, however, the ego is aware also of *the* thinking and thus of the supra-individual, the universal. "Ego-consciousness is necessarily consciousness of the *alter ego*" (p. 90).

Consciousness of objects may be intuition or thought. Generally the monad is receptive, inasmuch as it produces in relation to its organism, in sensing itself. However dull and undeveloped such perception may be, it is experienced by every monad. A possible intuition of external things presupposes a corresponding capability allowing the monad to be affected by outside stimulation and to produce in relation to the elicited functioning of the organism. In such a production, "the monad is in a higher differentiation what it is basically as sensing-itself" (p. 100).

To receive sense impressions as such does not mean to perceive external things. Synthesis can never be the result of a sensory activity. To be able to assign what is receptively given as properties to external objects presupposes the ability of object-consciousness, the ability to synthesize experiences and to identify objects — the capability of intuition. In this, the spontaneous unifying and identifying function of thinking is already effective. "Intuition is necessarily already thinking, intuition of objects, of things" (pp. 101f).

An ego's thing-production is thus rather complex. In it, the ego must not only be aware of itself as being an individual, a person, but must also experience its body and relate to things in space and time. Intuition, then, means an integrating of things and one's body into the order of possible givenness, into the world as "the whole of all the possible things" (p. 105). Intuition involves an anticipation of the world. The thing as such is an anticipation. It is presented in intuition as determinable, not as definitely determined; it is anticipated as a whole of possible determinations, as a project of methodical thinking that aims at a definite identification of the object. Such thinking, intending knowledge of the object, is to be distinguished from the synthesizing function of understanding that constitutes the thing of intuition. Not satisfied with the general notion associated with the name given the thing, methodical thinking starts with the perception of the determinable thing and aims at a knowledge of the actual identity of the being — at the concept of the object. "This process of thought is meaningful only inasmuch as there is being which is not merely a correlate of consciousness," but which is an existing object of progressive identification and determination (p. 109). The monad, especially of the rank of an ego, is possible

and meaningful only in the world.

In part 3, "Thought and Language" (pp. 110ff), the possibility of a communication between ego-monads, of an exchange of their productions, represents the core problem of the discussion. The monad is without windows. Its "perceptions" are its own exclusive possession, imperceptible to any other monad. The windowless condition of the subject, however, does not seem to be terribly tragic; it is conveniently overcome by the discovery that only the spatial permits an individuation of subjectivity, and that the monad can thus be real only when inseparably united with its organism. This organism offers the monad a secure pathway to the world, bringing knowledge of external reality by allowing the production of things in relation to the affection of a sense organ. It permits an access to the other mind also.

"External intuition preserves the isolation of the monad" (p. 111). Experience can directly be known only by its subject. The ego and its productions are essentially non-sensible. Sense impressions received from another ego as an individual cannot directly give a knowledge of his subjectivity. An ego can perceive another ego's organism, but not his mind. Together with the body, however, it grasps also expressions of the life of the other, and thus realizes that it is confronting a living being capable of experience, not a doll. It may "read" into these involuntary expressions conditions of the subject, taking these external manifestations as signs of an internal state. And what these expressions may reveal unknowingly and involuntarily, the ego may reveal intentionally by expressing itself through its organism. It may choose expressions as symbols of its productions and use them as a means of revealing itself. As a mutually understandable instrument of communication, this production of symbols obviously cannot be absolutely arbitrary. Language that is to meet this difficulty is basically related to knowledge; as an instrument of ego-communication it demands an understanding of the meaning of knowledge.

Knowing is the actualization of the ego's capability to abstract. It is the consciousness of what something is. Knowledge is thus "necessarily knowledge of the universal, and subsumption under the universal, or comparison" (p. 119). Consciously to have something as a "what" or to refer to it as a "what," already presupposes a cognitive mastery of this "what" as a universal. *Consciousness is essentially consciousness of the universal.* In the awareness of itself and in the production of things, the ego knows itself and the things as "cases of," and is thus accompanied by the knowledge of the universal. Universal knowledge is "consciousness of the individual as *one* individualized being." The specific aspect that allows a comparison of individuals is the awareness that "there are more beings of this kind"; abstraction is the presentation of this aspect as mental contents that remain a property of consciousness, independently of the presence or continuation of the individual. As a thinking of ideas, this type of thinking conquers the world for the monad. It keeps what is abstracted at the free disposal of the ego and turns it into a treasure of concepts by assigning to them sensory representations, that is, names. "Thinking is essentially *expressive* thinking, . . . possible only as a production of symbols" (pp. 122f).

As a capability of abstraction, ego-consciousness is thus essentially a capability of communication. The production of symbols, implicit in the thinking of universal concepts, leads to the development of language, that is, a production of symbols in conformity with a preexisting norm. This development is depen-

dent upon the existence of a language community, in which the ego-monad can actualize its capability of thinking through concepts and, through this objectification of his production, learn and make use of the language as the instrument of communication. Communication is possible only because "it is already practiced by others and the ego represents a capability to make a commonly understandable production of symbols its own" (p. 131). The problem of the ultimate origin of language is thus identical with the question concerning the origin of ego consciousness itself. "Language cannot have originated from nonlanguage" (p. 132) nor ego-consciousness from an experience "which is not ego-conscious or destined to become so" (p. 131), nor can experience have originated from nature. For "experience is essentially not nature" and "out of what is merely natural, only the natural can originate" (p. 132). To answer this paradoxical question by an appeal to the theory of descendance or to explain the origin of ego-consciousness as an evolution from primitive forms of experience is to give "an absolutely nonsensical information" (p. 131). The solution can be expected only in facing the ultimate question, as is done in the last part of the book.

Part 4 deals with "the object of mathematics" (pp. 155ff). It is declared to represent an independent study of its own, one not required for an understanding of the following explorations of the monad and its ultimate ground (p. 4). Its explanations are, however, closely related to the theme of the treatise, inasmuch as they are intended to understand mathematical being in terms of the theory of the monad, and to reduce the lack of agreement concerning the foundations of mathematics to a failure to investigate subjectivity.

The object studied in the mathematical sciences obviously is not a so-called ideal being, assumed to exist in itself in some manner "without any necessary relation to thinking or consciousness." To know such a being would simply be impossible — it contradicts the meaning of consciousness and thought. Thinking cannot be directed toward a being in itself; not even external perception is a contact with reality as such. "How consciousness is supposed to be an 'access' to an ideal transcendent being, however, this decisive question . . . cannot be solved, and it was therefore never solved by those operating with the concept of an ideal being-in-itself. It cannot be solved, because such a concept . . . is contradictory" (p. 156).

In sensory intuition things are given as objects of interpretation and as possible projects of methodical knowledge. In mathematics, however, objects are not given as determinable and possible problems. 'Given' means here "to be by virtue of having been posited," not as determinable but as unquestionable determination. Numbers and geometrical figures are posited freely, yet methodically. The philosophical problem of mathematical being is thus identical with the question, "how subjectivity itself can possibly be a free positing of objects" (p. 159). The monad obviously cannot find such objects as given. It must, accordingly, produce such freely posited individuations. The production of such objects is possible only "as an expression, as a production of symbols. Methodical production has to be production of symbols" (p. 160). The being of mathematics finds its explanation in an analysis of the structure of ego-consciousness.

The ability of the ego-monad freely to produce meaningful sensory stimulation is a manifestation of its consciousness of being able to act. This essential



aspect of the ego's constitution is examined in a discussion of the problem of freedom, which is introduced as a subtitle of part 5, "The cosmological antinomies" (pp. 173ff). Kant's cosmological ideas offer an occasion for dealing with freedom and with the question concerning the ultimate ground of the monad and the world.

The discussion of these most important philosophical problems is prepared by a brief outline and evaluation of Kant's cosmological antithetic in general. Kant's "whole antinomy of pure reason rests upon the dialectical argument: If the conditioned is given, the entire series of all its conditions is likewise given" (p. 175). What reason really is seeking in this series is the unconditioned, which can be identified either with a first unconditioned member of the series or with the totality of the series of the conditions, each of which is conditioned. The search ends in the antithetic of pure reason, that is, in the conflict among doctrines of seemingly dogmatic knowledge, in which no one assertion can establish superiority over another. The key to the solution of this conflict, Kant believed, was found in the doctrine of transcendental idealism. The basic dialectical argument holds true only for things-in-themselves, and not for objects of the phenomenal world, which are given only in experience and have no independent existence outside our thought.

This Kantian solution to the problem of the origin of the world obviously has to be rejected; it stands in evident contradiction to the demands of monadology. Appearances, mere representations, are possible solely as productions of a monad which, as individual, can be real only in the world. The spatial-temporal world, however, is not appearance, but a condition of the possibility of having appearances or representations of things. The key of transcendental idealism does not fit; the cosmological antithetic demands a realistic philosophical solution. The problem of the world in itself, which is not determined by inner-worldly relations, has to be met. As being in itself, "the world must be 'determined by'," we read in brief remarks on Kant's temporal conception of the first antinomy. This "determination by" cannot be identical with the structure of the world itself; to monadic thinking, the world is not an ultimate ground, founding itself. "The ground of the world is deeper than the world" (p. 182). Philosophically, this problem cannot be solved by "assuming" a creator of the world; it is later to find its answer in a confrontation of the radical doubt.

An analysis of Kant's third antinomy leads to a discussion of action, a specific manifestation of the monad's existence. A causal explanation of the appearances of the world results in the antithetic of pure reason, demanding the causality of freedom along with physical causality in accordance with the laws of nature. Transcendental freedom, understood as an absolute spontaneity of cause, is introduced in the thesis of the third antinomy. Kant combines the question of the first cause of natural events with the problem of freedom of action which, as a monadic production, is by definition not a phenomenon of nature. Maintaining in the antithesis that everything in the world takes place in accordance with the laws of nature, he nevertheless succeeds in defending human freedom; he discovers the possibility of a causality through freedom, which is supposed to be in harmony with the universal law of natural necessity. Viewed not as things-in-themselves, but taken for what they actually are, that is, as mere representations, events in the sensible world are connected according to empirical laws; as appearances, however, they must have

grounds that are not appearances. Effects of an intelligible cause, which as such cannot be an object of sensibility, appear, and, as appearances, are completely determined by other appearances; but their causality is not so determined. "Thus the effect may be regarded as free in respect to its intelligible cause, and at the same time in respect to appearances as resulting from them according to the necessity of nature," Kant writes in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (B565).

Kant's solution is found to be unacceptable. The third antinomy itself is seen to be possible only as the result of an unjustified identification of the world with innerworldly events. The world, however, is the principle of the determination of all events; it is not an event nor the sum-total of all events. As "the condition of the possibility of the reality of causes," it cannot be determined by a relation, possible only in the world (p. 186). Even Kant's understanding of causality is defective. Causality does not consist in a mere rule of succession of appearances, but in the determination of one being by another in a manner that it "is forced to be, . . . to happen" (p. 184). And, of course, causality in nature has nothing to do with appearances. "*The sensible world*," in which the conditions or the events of Kant's explanation are to take place, "does not exist at all, but only somebody's sensible world" (p. 185). Events are not appearances; "an action is simply something different from an event of nature, since it is a monad's action." It is "an intervention of the monad into the connections of nature, not into connections of the appearances of its sensible world." As a monadic reality, an action cannot happen necessarily like a natural event and at the same time be the free effect of an intelligible being. "The problem of freedom cannot be met, unless the problem of subjectivity is met" (p. 191).

The monadological vision of freedom is preceded by a critique of N. Hartmann's ideas about the subject. In his *Ethik*, this thinker is said to have proposed a seemingly convincing and attractive view of the problem of freedom, whereas actually he manifests a radical misunderstanding of human activity. Hartmann first warns of typical mistakes made in confronting the problem. Freedom of the will, which he considers to be the basic problem concerning freedom, should not be confused with freedom of action, nor with inner or psychological freedom, an independence from the course of inner happenings which are said to be determined no less than external events. It should be distinguished also from freedom of choice, since the act of choosing is just a manifestation of final determination.

Hartmann "has no concept of the monad" (p. 193). Thus it should not be surprising that his declarations about the problem of the freedom of the will are without solid foundation. "The will is a very specific temporal production . . . -anticipation of the future" (pp. 193f), not in the sense of foreseeing, but of proposing some future happening, which, I am aware, is depending upon myself, but not a necessary result of the course of natural events. This awareness presupposes that I am capable of action. To philosophically conceive the will thus requires a development of a philosophical concept of the monad as a capability of action.

As consciousness of being able to act or not to act, the ego-monad is capable of determining itself to future activity. "Such a production of the future is called will. Will thus presupposes freedom of the ego — the monad as capability of action and as consciousness of this capability. Freedom renders willing possible" (p. 194). The concept of the will is dependent upon the concept of

action; it cannot be separated from the notion of action, as Hartmann decrees. The will precedes the action, it is true; but it is essentially related to action. I may be prevented from doing what I want to do, "but I must be able to act in order in some cases to be prevented. This is a condition of my being able to will at all" (p. 194).

As he isolates the will from action, so Hartmann isolates also choice from will. Choice does not exclude the freedom of the will. Who chooses, knows that he is able to will; who wills, is resolved to act, because he knows that he is able to act. "As the will presupposes freedom as an ability to act and awareness of this ability, so choice presupposes the capability of willing, hence freedom" (p. 195). Identifying the problem of freedom with the question concerning the freedom of the will, without first inquiring into what the will is and how it is possible, as Hartmann does, is a wrong approach to this philosophical problem. Only a thoroughly examined concept of the monad allows its solution. It reveals the will as a specific monadic production related to action. An analysis of the monad as a capability of action is required in order to reach a definite concept of the will.

Earlier remarks about the production of the monad do not represent the final solution to the problem of action. Perception is not a monadic intervention into the connections of nature; sense impressions do not affect external reality. The monad has to be explained as an initiator of actions and thus as an original capability for disposing its organism. Without this ability to intervene in and to change the conditions of the external world, called *activity* (p. 206), the monad would not only be unable to procure food or to make desired experiences; also the performance of specific functions of ego-consciousness, like speaking and thus thinking, would be impossible. "The ability to act and the awareness of it, that is, freedom, is a condition of being-an-ego" (p. 204).

Action is not to be conceived of as a mutual interaction of two spheres of being, of non-spatial experience or consciousness and the body or its processes. The monad is an "inseparable whole of experience and organism, which is founded on experience as an individuated principle" (p. 204). One cannot ask about the relation, when both exist by virtue of it (p. 205). Nor is every process of the organism an activity. Stimulations of sense organs, vegetative functions, or motoric processes "are not my actions." "The complete and total reality is the action of the monad, the monadic mastery over its members" (p. 205).

As an individual, the ego not only is in the world, but also is aware of being in the world. This consciousness, however, is not yet fully realized with the production of things and of transcendence discussed before. This production of transcendence is not yet a consciousness of *real* things. It is only production of something as external with the knowledge that I receive stimuli from something transcendently external... "The genuine and complete consciousness of external reality is possible only" when the ego "brings itself by its organism in relationship to the external" (p. 207). "Since an ego is world-consciousness as consciousness of the real world, it is necessarily activity, ability to act, determining itself to actions" (p. 208).

"An ego must essentially be activity" (p. 208). As such, it is condemned to act, driven to that activity, which creates the conditions of being able to act, to remain an individual who can act. From the moment of my birth I am burdened by this compulsion to work for the preservation of the vitality of the organism



which is required for intervening in external reality, to live against the ultimate threat, in order finally to be overwhelmed, despite all struggle and resistance. The decisive question in this regard does not concern the fact of our end – “death is our certain destiny” (p. 211) – but the necessity of our death, in the sense that an immortality of the monad would be impossible. The concept of the monad, it is found, simply does not imply any reason to assume such a necessity. There may be another world, in which the monad will not be subject to the tragic burden of our present condition. “Another form of bodiliness of existence, is possible. The hope of mankind is based on the fact that this compulsion is not a necessity. How could it have fallen for this hope, if the situation were otherwise” (p. 212). Faith proclaims that “a creator of all life has taken the law of death from us . . . What faith believes . . . must be possible.” (p. 215)

The philosophical justification of this faith is to be investigated through a confrontation with radical doubt in part 6: “The Ultimate Question and the Ultimate Ground.” (pp. 216ff) The ultimate, radical question is to lead to the knowledge of the ultimate ground of the world, the ego, and of all its manifestations. Descartes’ attempt at mastering the radical doubt thus cannot be considered adequate; it could arrive at the certainty of the subject’s existence only on the basis of a refusal to question the being of consciousness. The radical question demands the questioning of everything; it implies that there be nothing, requires the denial or “exclusion of the all” (p. 230). In this negation of everything (seemingly also excluding the possibility of a necessary being), that which absolutely cannot be conceived of as not-existing and necessarily has to be, is said to make its appearance.

“There be nothing,” I declare. Why am I unable to avoid using this ‘is’ or ‘be,’ even when asserting that there *is nothing*?

Because, whatever may ‘be,’ an X or a nothing, X or nothing is in any case something determined . . . It does not matter what this determined something is, whether it be thoughts, concepts, judgments, sentences, thinking, the monad, things, objects, the world, nothing, something undetermined – it is determined by the principle of determination. Since the principle of determination rules everything, including the being of thought, naturally the being of the nothing or of the X, as well – so the principle of determination, *the determination itself* cannot be thought of as not-being. And its being inconceivable as not-being means here, of course, that it is the absolutely necessary being, independently of the fact that there be a thinking, grasping its necessity. (p. 230)

Everything is “dominated,” supported,” “carried” by the determination-itself. “It is effective in every question, every doubt, denial, truth, and lie . . . It is the ultimate ground, the ground of all the grounds . . . the absolute, necessary, ultimate being” (pp. 232f). The determination-itself is determined by itself; it is the coincidence of essence and existence, *causa sui*, self-thinking resting in itself. It is *actus purus*, the all-dominating principle and thus unique: it is God.

The preceding explanation concerning the unavoidable “domination” of even the idea of nothing by the determination-itself may thus be considered an argument for the existence of God, “of the highest argumentative value, more powerful than any other proof” (p. 240). The ontological and cosmological arguments especially are found to be rather defective: since they proceed from

"made presuppositions," they "naturally" cannot establish God's existence (p. 238). An argument "proceeding from" something could obviously assure us of the existence of God only by way of something that itself is not God, and thus would fail to prove his existence. For "a theistic argument is a proof from himself, from God himself." It "does not posit something, from which it concludes, but it brings itself in one undivided step to him, grasping what is dominating everything (premises, presuppositions, thinking, beings)" (p. 240).

The determination-itself has no necessary relation to everything that it is not itself. The world can only be the free result of his Being, that is, creation. To maintain the self-sufficiency of the world or to believe in the certainty of one's own existence and to doubt the existence of God is a perversion of the truth. The ego is able to be without doubt about itself and to doubt concerning God only, because there is a God. "The world is understandable only as creation" (p. 244). God, the *causa sui*, is the ultimate ground of the world and of the monad.

*The Monad* is an outstanding work of genuine, serious philosophy. Its thinking reveals a powerful speculative mind that, unafraid of widely recognized authorities, dares to question their philosophical insights and allegedly final solutions, and to ask ultimate questions about man and the world. It is a joy to follow Cramer's refreshing, critical look at the meaning, background, and consequences of philosophical teachings and to discover that his evaluations are generally objective and sound. The work requires careful and patient reading, however, especially for the reader who has been trained to consider philosophy primarily as an analysis of concepts and methods used in the understanding and reasoning of common sense and science. The author certainly cannot be accused of being excessively microscopical, absorbed in a clarification of minute aspects of mental functions, and sedulously refusing to talk about the cosmos. Standing in the tradition of rationalism, not of positivism, Cramer identifies philosophy with the study of the ultimate reasons and grounds of what is seemingly self-evident, not with a detailed analysis of the exact understanding of such self-evident expressions or opinions. And mainly criticizing leading proponents of phenomenological and existentialist thought, he uses terms and concepts that, like theirs, will be considered vague and imprecise by many English-speaking colleagues. His arbitrary terminology and his frequent identification of actual mental functions with corresponding capabilities and with the monad and the person itself may be rather irritating. His discussions of philosophical problems and their historical conceptions, however, are original and interesting; they offer valuable insights and deserve serious attention.

This appreciation of the work is naturally not to be understood as an unconditional endorsement of every single view expressed. Not only details of its interpretations of philosophical positions will meet with disagreement; decisive aspects of the philosophy and metaphysics of man that the treatise is intended to defend may also rightly be questioned. Only some of these questions concerning the monad and its world can briefly be discussed in this review.

The actualistic identification of the monad with experience or with any type of consciousness obviously cannot be justified when the possibility of a "sleeping monad" (p. 44) is admitted; and the determinations of the monad as being consciousness and as possibly being asleep are incompatible with the assertion of

its being an "inseparable whole of experience and organism." The relation between these two constitutive parts of the monadic whole demands a philosophical analysis. To declare that such an analysis is impossible, because each of these elements is what it is only through the other in the whole, is as unsatisfactory and unrealistic as asserting, for instance, that the function of the heart or brain cannot be explained, since they are living organs only in and through the organism. In all the degrees of manifestation, subjectivity is said to be "principally" different from processes of the body, neither identical with nor caused by stimulations of the senses or physiological functions of the nervous system. Therefore it is "absurd" to attempt an explanation of the origin and nature of this unique being in terms of material reality or by an appeal to the theory of evolution. The monad is non-spatial, non-sensible, windowless; yet even the consciousness of the monadic rank of the self is declared to be possible only as a bodily self. How can this non-spatial monadic existence be what it is only through somatic functions and these themselves only through consciousness in the inseparable wholeness of the monad? Is every form of experience such an organic function? Is, for instance, ego-consciousness truly a "bodily self," a manifestation of the human body? Such important philosophical questions do not receive a definite answer; statements about the essentially non-spatial nature of monadic existence, being essentially non-sensible and not caused by, yet possible only "through," organic functions and structures, and statements about its necessarily bodily existence in general are not reconciled in the book nor do they seem to be reconcilable.

The relationship of subjectivity to the organism in cognitive functions is, then, described as a production with regard to organic stimulation by the external world. In experience, the windowless monad is developing itself in relation to such physiological stimulations. It is difficult to understand how such a windowless subjectivity could be aware of organic processes, differentiate internal and external stimuli, or be correct in its corresponding judgments. What is more important for an evaluation of this monadology, however, is the exact determination of this relationship. Assumed, not granted, that a windowless monad can become aware of this organic stimulation, is this bodily change, then, to be conceived of as a mere condition of subjectivity, or is it to be understood as some kind of causal factor or co-cause in conformity with statements about the wholeness and inseparability of the non-spatial and spatial in monadic existence and function? In the latter case, experience or consciousness would represent a psychosomatic function and the "bodily self" a substantial unity, as they are understood in the Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy of sensitive life. Such an understanding of the necessarily organic dependence of monadic production in relation to bodily stimulation, however, seems to deprive this monadology of its reason for existence. The subject described in this book actually is not a monad. The entire meaning that rightly can be associated with its 'being without windows' concerns the essential difference between the mental and the physical, seldom denied in the history of thought. As an "inseparable whole of experience and organism," the monad is not windowless; it is by definition world-consciousness and by its constitution has access to external reality.

Not only the monad's production, but also its existence has the world as a necessary condition. Subjectivity is possible only in the world — not because of the obvious reason that as bodily self it has an organism and somatic needs, but



because it is individualized,— the monad is found to be possible only as realized by the principle of individuation, the world. Many questions could be asked about the world as described in this book. Of special interest certainly would be a clarification of its individualizing function. Is the world as principle of individuation simply to be identified with the fact of the existence of concrete beings or is it as “the condition of their possibility,” truly a reality independent of the existence of individual things and their relations? *The Monad* seems to favor the latter alternative; it does *not* seem, however, to offer any sufficient reason for its assertion, nor is the impossibility of an individual Cartesian *res cognitans* self-evident.

Pressing questions could be asked also about monadological views concerning the origin and the end of the ego. If the monad truly is possible only as an inseparable whole of experience and organism, the simple rejection of the theory of descendance as “an absolutely nonsensical answer” can scarcely be considered a satisfactory response to facts and questions related to the origin of species of living beings. Nor can the assertion “language presupposes language” (p. 131) be realistically taken as a sufficient proof for the necessary demand of a divine creation of the self, which is assumed to be possible only as a bodily self in the world. The statement that the concept of this essentially bodily monad does not reveal any reason for speaking against its immortality is mere assertion; such an organic whole seems, on the contrary, necessarily to be destined toward disintegration. And faith and hope in immortality as such are obviously no proof for human survival.

The metaphysics of the monad may perhaps be experienced as the expression of a beautiful, idealistic faith; it has, however, scarcely any chance to be taken seriously as a realistic philosophical answer to the ultimate questions of philosophy. Its allegedly unique argument for the existence of the ultimate ground of the monad and the world merely implies the notion of indefinite being; it does not establish the existence of the infinite Being, God. Whatever I think, whatever there may be, I have to conceive something or there has to be something. This something, or “determination,” involved in such “one-step” thinking is “determination-itself,” understood not as absolute, infinite Being, but merely in the sense of *aliquid*, or the being-in-general of traditional ontology. A philosophical knowledge of the infinite being can be expected only as the result of a philosophical explanation of finite reality, which obviously is existing, and not merely a “made presupposition,” that is, by way of the metaphysical principle of causality. A “one-step” path to God’s being, proceeding from an *ens rationis*, like ‘nothing,’ is simply impossible. To demand a theistic argument proceeding from God himself, however, ignores the essentially limited conditions of the mode of knowledge of an *animal rationale* and, even more, aspects of that bodily self described in the preceding parts of the book.

And finally, human certainty of God’s existence can be declared as grounds for a possible philosophizing about the world (p. 244) and for the subject’s certainty about his own existence only at the price of a confusion of epistemological and ontological reasoning. The existence of a creator, not a philosophical knowledge of God, would be presupposed in a realistic conception of an existing and thinking creature. This philosophical knowledge, however, is inconceivable without assuming at least some kind of awareness of his contingent existence on

the side of the philosophizing subject.

Cramer's work is a rare product of serious and profound philosophical speculation. Its philosophy and metaphysics of the monad, however, will scarcely be considered the final answer to the ultimate questions of human existence.

## HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY\*

J. Mittelstrass, *Neuzeit und Aufklärung. Studien zur Entstehung der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft und Philosophie.*\*\*

Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1970, 651 pp.

Hans-Georg Gadamer

Translated by David J. Marshall jr.

J. Mittelstrass, who has achieved recognition for his erudition and, in particular, for his knowledge of the history of ancient and modern science,\*\* has published two new studies. In reading them, one becomes aware of the orientation, characteristic of his work in the history of philosophy, towards the operational theory of Paul Lorenzen. *Neuzeit und Aufklärung* (*The Modern Age and the Enlightenment*) is a sizeable volume that grew out of the thesis that earned him habilitation at the University of Erlangen; *Das praktische Fundament der Wissenschaft* (*The Practical Foundations of Science*), the more recent publication, is his inaugural lecture at the University of Constance. His treatment of Western philosophy is commanded by the view that its purpose is "rational independence"; he attempts to show that, fundamental to the program of the Enlightenment, this ideal is incomplete apart from the conception of a constructivistic justification of the overall praxis in which science is embedded. Even the history of science, he says, will have begun to realize its deepest purpose only when it is conceived in a normative way, when praxis has become the goal of its orientation.

On this basis he distinguishes a first and a second enlightenment, one Greek, beginning with Thales and going to Plato and Aristotle, the other modern, beginning with Galileo. In this, as in the conscious subordination of all history to the objective criteria of reason, his perspective resembles that of the neo-Kantian

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\* Translated from "Wissenschaftsgeschichte und praktische Philosophie," *Philosophische Rundschau*, 20. Jahrgang, Heft 1/2, pp. 86-93.

\*\* J. Mittelstrass, *Die Rettung der Phänomene. Ursprung und Geschichte eines antiken Forschungsprinzips* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962). Also "Ontologia more geometrico demonstrata (K. Gaiser)," in, *Philosophische Rundschau* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Sieberts]), no. 14 (1967), pp. 27-40.



problem of history: There is a rapprochement of Plato and Galileo; modern philosophy is viewed as centering around Kant, who constitutes not only the consummation of the Enlightenment but also the final standard for systematic philosophy. In these studies, devoted specifically to theoretical philosophy, however, he gives practical philosophy more emphatic prominence than have neo-Kantians heretofore.

He defends the view that a theory removed from practice and a purely technological rationality were absolutized in the modern mind as the result of a bad enlightenment. The good enlightenment, he says, strives for universal rational independence, that is, for a praxis justified by rational grounds. Its goal is to justify each of its propositions by reason. The idea of justification in this program makes theory itself appear as a series of actions, more precisely as a "spontaneous continuation of practical activity." Manifestly, what he defends — with spirited sallies against the view that pure theory has any claim to autonomy — and what he labels the primacy of praxis, is the above mentioned operational justification of rational language called for by the program of Paul Lorenzen.

I too view the primacy of practical reason as one of the genuine insights of the moral philosophy of Kant and Fichte. But it seems to me the question still remains open whether on that premise theoretical reason itself is to be understood as praxis, so that theory appears as stabilization of praxis, and whether Mittelstrass' treatment of what Lorenzen calls factual and normative genesis is correct.

These questions can be discussed on the basis of the more recent publication stemming from his inaugural lecture at the University of Constance. It argues for a procedure of constructivistic answerability involving not only a constructivistic, praxis oriented justification of logic in the form of an "ortho-language," but also the establishment of ethics by a justification of the legislative power of practical reason. This point, though not appearing until the end of the short publication, is the clearest one in the entire treatise. The purpose here is to establish a normative theory of science that steers a just middle course between critical theory in the style of the Frankfurt school and critical rationalism in the style of Popper. It views scientism as an unwarranted confinement of reason to technological rationality and seeks to render it, together with its counterpart, the speculative traditions, obsolete.

All is said in the merry tone of "Constance philosophers" (p. 27), who heap derision upon philosophy for loitering in the "back alleys of science" (p. 24), for using a terminology "in which questions are asked in which no one other than the one asking them has any interest, and in which answers are given that no one other than the one giving them can understand" (p. 27), since they are "hopelessly antiquated; (Descartes is dead!)" (p. 61), and for having "a conception of science of which misapprehension is the distinctive property." And so on.

This proposal to rehabilitate the "dented prestige of philosophy" (p. 40) asks for a bit of humor. One may easily share the author's opinion that sterile discussions of the relations between philosophy and science are of no use, and one will surely welcome historical reflections on the subject from a man familiar with the tradition, especially if his motives are of a philosophical nature — as they certainly are in the present case. Mittelstrass' intent is to make it clear to scientists that they must learn not only to understand their work methodologically, but also to justify it teleologically. For "science is nothing else than the theory of

praxis justified in its goals" (p. 59) — and philosophy is the establishing of this claim. This, then, is the real heart of the matter.

It is quite right that only by a modern kind of science concerned ultimately with the rationale of technology was the universal learning that once bore the name of philosophy constrained to assume the precarious role of a super-science, and thus demeaned or exalted to the position of an academic remnant. In view of this it may appear that Mittelstrass' intent is to revitalize the Platonic-Aristotelian program outlined by Socrates in the *Phaedo* to derive theory, that is, ultimate reasons and justifications, from the concerns of practical reason. In reality it is and it is not. In view of the fact that he had already demonstrated his competence in the history of science — particularly of Greek science — some of the accents set in both the book and the lecture are surprising. He tells us, for example, that while the *Phaedo* was completely unnecessary, the great theoretical advance of Thales, his orientation towards geometric axiomatics, had in fact already involved the kind of theory that stabilizes praxis. In a similar vein, he takes Plato and Aristotle to conceive theory as the "stabilization of experientially elicited orientations."

Even in the Aristotelian conception, theory is taken to be, in the final analysis, the highest praxis. Why this should be an exaggeration on the part of Aristotle I have no idea. Although conceiving theory as praxis, Mittelstrass must nonetheless be reluctant to see it as the highest praxis, a view he associates with such things as the autonomy of science, the postulate of free thought, etc. (p. 55).

It is undoubtedly right that if the Platonic and Aristotelian program is understood as "independent praxis," it may be viewed as having degenerated, in the course of ancient history, into private or purely academic enterprises. Mittelstrass' "studies" agree with the outline contained in his more recent shorter publication in connecting in an extremely one-sided way the operational structure of the mathematics of Thales, or rather an idealized reconstruction of it based on the work of Neugebauer, Van der Waerden and Szabo — with the meta-mathematics of Plato, and even with the Aristotelian theory of proof, as if Platonic dialectics were knowledge based upon proof and not rather justification of a completely different type, and as if the Aristotelian search for principles (*archai*) were to find its consummation in demonstration. In all events, the kind of practical philosophy that Aristotle separates from the theoretical can in no way be bound up with the kind of operational or constructivistic ideal envisaged by Mittelstrass. The teleological philosophy of Plato and Aristotle that derives its orientation from the *logoi*, leads, on the contrary, to the question whether it is not just this philosophy which, insofar as it aims at a theoretical understanding and treatment of the world as a pragmatic reality, may be called a theory of praxis, calling for a teleological foundation of the science of what can be otherwise. This gives rise to the question as to whether the physics and the metaphysics of such a program, once carried out, would not, in the final analysis, consist in a surrender of precisely what is accidental to the concern of mere empiricism.

This, in any case, is the image presented by the particular sciences of the Hellenistic period; it distinguishes them from the schools of philosophy. Mittelstrass makes no further mention of these sciences, nor of Rome and the discovery of jurisprudence, but only of the subsequent degeneration of rationality into theology; thereby he does not call attention to the enormous mass of practical philosophy ("remnants of [Greek] rationality") adopted by the Christian Middle

Ages and preserved in its synthesis of philosophy and science.

It is not until he gets to the beginning of modern science that Mittelstrass again sharpens his focus. He is certainly right in giving prominence to the revolution brought about by Galileo, which he excellently characterizes as the transition from a phenomenal to an instrumental concept of experience, to a view of experience as a construct. Furthermore, there is a noteworthy exposition of the technological praxis that played into the hands of the new theory. Indeed, the excellent analyses of the "proto-physics" figuring in the foundation of Galileo's mechanics deserve high praise. To say it right away, the high point of the book's real value — although it may be of purely historical interest — is, in my opinion, the interpretation of Leibniz in the second part. The way in which he identifies constructivistic motifs in the mathematical-theoretical construction of Leibniz' speculative metaphysics, or provides a logical legitimization of concepts like 'perception' is convincing. But what a strange thesis, to hold that Descartes is the one responsible for the deterioration of Galileo's praxis-stabilizing theory into an academic primacy of theory, and hence for the release of a technical rationality which has no need for teleological justification. As unwilling as he is to recognize the rationality of Rome or the praxis-stabilizing role of Greek rationality in the Middle Ages, so also is he unwilling to perceive that it is not Descartes, but the very principles of modern science itself that have burst the ancient bond by which all theory was linked to praxis. Even though Galileo proposed an outline of mechanics that satisfies to a great extent the requirement for practical justification, the fact remains that the ancient union of science with the "practical" experience of nature had been dissolved. By abandoning the quest for the knowledge of substances and putting in its stead the methodic construct, modern science made possible a new kind of technological rationality of which the methodic ideal renders a theory of social praxis simply absurd. The Enlightenment idea of a "Natural science of souls" is an example of this absurdity; another is Descartes' hesitation with respect to his doctrine of the "provisory ethic." Mittelstrass does not shrink from the enormity of calling the awkwardness found in attempting to unite the new science of modern physics with a more ancient way of thought a "momentary" awkwardness. Is it momentary? Is not this rather the precise point at which the "bad" enlightenment keeps arising, both in the nineteenth and in the twentieth century? Has not this moment already been with us for a good while? In what dimensions does Mittelstrass conceive the future, that the recent centuries can appear to him as yesterday?

The basic insight elicits our complete agreement. Against technological rationality, culminating in the epistemological thesis that science is to be free of value judgments, the claim of praxis, in the genuine sense of the word, must be asserted. In this context it seems natural to invoke, as Mittelstrass does, the Aristotelian opposition of *praxis* (doing) and *poiesis* (making).

It would have been better, undoubtedly, to invoke the opposition of *phronesis* (judgment) and *techné* (method), the corresponding kinds of knowledge. This would have made it appear more clearly that theoretical knowledge in Aristotle's conception of it, particularly the hierarchical structure of the sciences corresponding to the apodictical concept of *epistémē* (science), is utterly unrelated to the notion of construction that distinguishes modern science. The paradigmatic case of *epistémē* is mathematics — which is obviously *theoria*. The ap-



plication of mathematics to experience, which constitutes modern science, is neither *theoria* in the same sense nor, certainly, *praxis*; rather it is an example of the purposive reason belonging to *poiesis*. But this, according to Mittelstrass, does not do justice to the true concept of modern science or to the novelty of its claim as theory.

I understand very well what he means by that. Aristotle's concept of *episteme*, including the logical theory of inference, while an example of *theoria*, has indeed in common with *poietic techne* (productive method) that it does not have to justify itself. In this context the reference to Aristotle is very enlightening. The way in which ancient mathematics functions in modern physics can sooner be termed an example of *techne* than of justification by reason. Mittelstrass consequently goes on to pursue the question concerning the extent to which the new science of physics can satisfy the requirement of finding a constructive justification before the court of reason, and to what extent it is slipping into the scientism of mere empiricism. This is the point from which he conducts his analyses in connection with Galileo, Newton, Locke and Hume; these analyses provide the history of philosophy and of science with new accents, going as far as to effect a surprising assimilation of Locke to Descartes and of Hume to Kant (325ff).

This too can be given expression within the conceptual framework of Aristotle. *Episteme* as such does not provide any justification of its principles. But when, with the help of *nous* (mind), it becomes aware of them, it can no longer be taught by way of demonstration. Plato calls it dialectic, Aristotle *sophia*. This, although sustained and made possible by *praxis*, is for Aristotle the genuine theoretical 'best-ness' (Schadewaldt's rendering of *arete*). In any case it is absolutely clear to Aristotle that *theoria* does not have the function of stabilizing *praxis*, but that *praxis*, rather, and practical reason have the function of investing *theoria* with the stability it requires to seek the highest principles — those that justify all other knowledge. It is not my intention to emphasize this as a mere historical reminder, but as a criticism. As long as the liberation of theory is not recognized as a practical and social achievement, we are largely unable to understand how "science" can be mistaken for a method of production, and why it is that practical reason has the power to put theory to a technological use — which, as all will agree, it does, at least in the form of practical unreason.

In one point, however, the perspective commanding Mittelstrass' work has my full agreement. It was after he had undergone the corrective influence of Rousseau that Kant was able to give practical philosophy its true meaning again and to liberate it from the perverting influence of technological rationality ("Seelenphysik," pp. 358ff). His discussion of the practical role played by utopias is also factually quite correct although it fails regrettably to take note of the dialectical structure of these practical concepts that as utopias, "nowheres," would nowhere provide actual directives. In this connection I am unable to see what advantage Plato's systematic utopia derives from being justified in view of the fact that sooner than anything else it is the paradox of the community of wives and children in the *Republic* that is judged "in need of justification," nor am I able to see whether Marx can be interpolated between Plato and Orwell (374). But the paramount question is whether the Kantian insight that freedom is a fact of reason can be so adjusted as to be subordinated to the idea of constructivistic justification, so that in the final analysis it turns out that practical

reason can be taught. Can this be held in the name of Kant? Did Rousseau not correct him after all?

These questions, it seems to me, want clarification. If justification is demanded for the totality of praxis, then it is demanded, no doubt, for the praxis involved in the particular exercise of a theoretical science, that is, in research. Since antiquity the same has held for *poietic* action, or rather for the relation between *techne* and *phronesis*. But what is justification? It is the teaching of Kant, who is the very one invoked as an example, that even "common moral reason" strives for a justification of its decisions.

The unfailing consciousness of duty is a form of activity of practical reason; it is not induced by philosophical reflexions on morality to keep the absolute character of the moral command in view. The necessity of working out a special rule for philosophical reflexions on morality arises only for the reflexion itself, and only with respect, therefore, to the dialectic of practical reason. This is what Kant had done in the formalism of the categorical imperative, his "typology of the power of judgment" was developed as a kind of rule for reflexion. In this context therefore, justification had the character of what Hegel calls "law-examining reason." But this can hardly apply to the unfailing feeling for duty of the simple heart. Against such a view Kant himself invokes the authority of Socrates [Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Akad. Ausgabe, p. 404; or *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?*, trans. and ed. by L. W. Beck (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1959), p. 20] to show that common human reason has within it the power to attain its principle so that it needs neither science nor philosophy to know what must be done.

Still it must be admitted that even Kant believes in the ideal of the moral perfection of humankind. This appears already in the theses he defends (in his article "That May Be Right for Theory," 1793) against the historical scepticism of Moses Mendelssohn. At the same time it is entirely in conformity with his moral philosophy that the postulate that everything be done for the moral perfection of humanity is necessary. But in this case, as in many others — in particular in the "Struggle of the Faculties" — he derives from this postulate, considered in relation to the appearances, an optimistic prognosis and believes in the actual moral perfectibility of the human race. But the justification for this is not — as Mittelstrass suggests — in the foundations of his moral philosophy; it is in experience, more precisely, in the experience of the power of pure practical reason, which for Kant reveals itself in the field of politics, for example, in the American Declaration of Independence, or in the field of education in experience with children.

Practical philosophy, it may be mentioned, occupies in Mittelstrass' large book, *Neuzeit und Aufklärung* (*The Modern Age and the Enlightenment*) only a single parenthetical section (§10). Precisely this, however, seems to me to shed a clear light on the basic weakness of his entire critical examination of history. Its first premise is the opposition of history and reason. The dominant theme is that constructivistic justification is the only way to rational independence. In this perspective history takes on the aspect of a scapegoat. A critical history of science is concerned only with false propositions. The division is, in my opinion, of fateful consequence. It may well be that I am one of those who have been "perverted by too much history." But the statements made in this paragraph

about such things as Cartesian metaphysics, the soliloquizing authority of Descartes — whose *Meditations* are, in spite of all, meditations, hence thought processes common to each and all of us — or the absurdities of the Cartesians signify in my eyes an enormous distortion of what a reasonable study of history ought to aim at: the recognition that such false propositions were made in answer to legitimate inquiries that had asserted themselves, even though their manner was tied up with tradition, and that only the ancient tradition of metaphysics and moral philosophy — not the ideal of a constructivistic justification — was able to compensate for the one-sided-ness of a *poietic* misconception of reason. The fact that “false propositions” are evidence of the real concerns of reason is quite covered over by the author when he treats the “absurdities” with derision in the superior manner characteristic of one who knows everything better.

In his inaugural lecture at the University of Constance, Mittelstrass is explicit in taking the study of history as an example to justify his postulate of justification (pp. 65ff). The study of history, in his view, is “nothing else than the completion of an intentionally systematic and normative reflection (*einer systematisch-normativ sich verstehenden Reflexion*) by a critical reconstruction of its own (imperfect) praxis,” hence, to follow Mittelstrass in using the language of Lorenzen, “the description of a factual genesis by means of a normative genesis.” If one now enquires after the practical justification contained implicitly in this definition of history, the answer given is this: History is necessary to convert objective determinisms [*Abhängigkeiten* — those resulting from “imperfect praxis,” that is, from human finitude] “into determinisms which are grasped and therefore within our control.” This can be formulated differently: Objective determinisms must be grasped by the social sciences so that they can be liberated from the mere blind facticity of their history. The understanding of history renders itself anhistorical. How Mittelstrass would justify his own historical studies on this basis I can hardly say. In my opinion, he has made respectable contributions to an ‘understanding’ of Galileo’s and Leibniz’ ‘proto-physics’ and has advanced similar work, done in the school of von Weizsäcker, on Kant. I could understand Mittelstrass’ describing, in such cases, a factual genesis by means of a normative genesis. But while Lorenzen conceives this procedure as being of a dialectical nature, Mittelstrass would make use of it to render objective determinisms controllable. Which determinisms? Does he refer to our being determined by the dominant scientism? or by the germs of a philosophy that lie hidden in the natural slime of unartificial language?

Mittelstrass would be poorly suited to liberate us from the latter. Unfortunately the language and thought of his own work is as yet undisciplined and rather immature. I should not like to present an anthology of his stylistic faux pas, or a catalogue of his inadequacies, or do anything of a nature to cast a shadow of discredit on the productivity of the young scholar. But it is a bit hard to imagine how his vague way of speaking with the thousand recurrences of such expressions as ‘indeed,’ ‘perhaps,’ ‘something like,’ ‘nothing else than’ is to be reconciled with the “praxis (of disciplined) speech” or especially with the idea of “ortho-language.”



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the case of articles and reviews not originally written for *CGP* that are carried in translation, the Editors assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the bibliographical references. Notwithstanding, whenever, in the course of reworking the notes for an English language readership, an error is discovered, an endeavor is made, with the cooperation of the author, to correct it.

*CGP* is prepared to announce the titles of books originating in German, translations of which into English are in preparation, have (within a period of two years) appeared, or are scheduled to appear. The information for such announcements, including the date by which a particular work is anticipated, or on which it appeared or is scheduled to appear, and the name of the publisher, will be welcomed by the Coordinator from persons directly involved.

In addition, plans are being made to publish reviews of up to a page or so in length of a number of translations into English of both classical and contemporary works originating in German in each issue. The submission of review copies is invited, which, in case a review is not planned, will eventually be returned to the sender.

## USAGES WITHIN CGP

*A Manual of Style* (for the present volume, the Twelfth Edition [Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969] is CGP's authority in matters of form, except as qualified by our "Instructions Pertaining to the Preparation of Translations and Guide Lines for the Preparation of Reviews for CGP." The following special usages will be of interest to the reader:

1) In the case of a translation, notes listed under small roman numerals are by the translator or, where specifically indicated, by the Coordinator or person responsible for the editing.

2) *Brackets and Parentheses*: If an author introduces a term, short phrase, or brief explanation into a translation which does not appear in the published German edition, this material is placed within pointed brackets: "<...>." An ellipse within pointed brackets indicates that something in the original has been omitted at the author's request.

Author-determined changes — which will sometimes be very minor — are thus set off from words and phrases occasionally introduced by the translator or Editor to render a translation more understandable, for which the use of square brackets, "[...]," not enclosed within parentheses is reserved.

Square brackets in other usages may occur within parentheses, or in series.

Foreign words introduced into the text of a translation that occur in the original German are placed in simple parentheses, which have the normal range of other usages, as well.

3) *Single Quotations*: Most of the many admissible usages of single quotes are adequately covered in *A Manual of Style*. The admission of the third of the usages here considered, as a concession to a fairly common practice within philosophical literature, principally occasions this special consideration. Single quotes may be used (i) as scope indicators around a phrase, in its initial occurrence, employed to translate a foreign term for which there is no appropriate single term in English, (ii) to indicate a special or restricted sense for a term, (iii) to indicate the *mention*, as distinguished from the *use* of a term, the latter being indicated by double quotes.

The first and second usages can be especially useful in translation. The third usage, or a surrogate, will sometimes be found essential to conveying the meaning of a German text. Seeing that both the second and third usages pertain to single terms, however, they tend to be incompatible. The problem may be resolved in either of two ways: (i) The first resolution grows out of the following supplementary instruction: In the case of the first and second usages, the affected phrase or term, *upon its first occurrence within the text*, shall be followed by a foreign word being translated, in parentheses, or, if such is needed, by a translator's note. The resolution: In the case of the second usage, the translator may elect to place the foreign term translated (to be in parentheses) following the term enclosed in single quotes, *not merely the first time in which it occurs, but each time it occurs*. The foreign word in brackets will then serve as a flag to indicate the usage of single quotes which is in force. (ii) A translator may indicate mention by placing a term in italics, rather than by the use of single quotes, explaining this choice in a translation note. This resolution will have appeal where the second usage occurs with some frequency and where competing usages of italics can be avoided.

4) *Scope Indicators*: Parenthetical page references within the text of a review originating in English may follow a phrase, a sentence, or a group of sentences (the latter usually constituting a paragraph) being quoted or paraphrased. Where the reference pertains only to the phrase or sentence it immediately follows, this is indicated by the placement of the formal punctuation mark — usually a comma or a period — following the parenthesis.

Whitehead's simple declaration, "Objectification is abstraction" (p. 62), reflects his philosophy of science more adequately than it does his metaphysical orientation. [Not: "... abstraction," (p. 62)]

Hegel writes: "What philosophy begins with must be either mediated or immediate, and it is easy to show that it can neither be the one nor the other; thus either way of beginning is refuted" (p. 67). [Not: "... refuted." (p. 67)]

Where the page reference serves to document more than one sentence, it stands free of punctuation. In this case the paragraphing or some other stylistic device serves to co-determine the scope.

In the case of translated articles or reviews, parenthetical page references, where such occur, are placed within periods or commas, *except where it appears fairly evident that the reference covers more than the phrase or sentence terminated by one of these punctuation marks*, in which case it is placed outside of the punctuation.

## PLANNED FOR VOLUME 4

(The names of translators appear in parentheses)

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- Friedrich Kambartel, *Ethics and Mathematics* (Julius A. Gervasi and Bernhard Rentsch)
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